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# SERMONS I HAVE PREACHED TO YOUNG PEOPLE

*Edited by*

SIDNEY A. WESTON, PH.D.

AUTHOR OF "JESUS AND THE PROBLEMS OF LIFE,"  
"JESUS' TEACHINGS," ETC.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

IN soliciting the material for this volume the editor asked each of these sixteen authors for "the sermon you have preached which is most representative of your message to young people." No specific subject was assigned, no attempt made to secure a certain range of thought; yet a perusal of the contents reveals a remarkable diversity and scope of ideas.

It is hoped that these messages may help other leaders, preachers, parents, teachers, — in interpreting the meaning of life to the young people of today.

The addresses are arranged alphabetically according to authors.



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## **THE WITNESS WITH POWER**

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## THE WITNESS WITH POWER

*But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. — Acts 1:8.*

THESE words are the key to the meaning of the Book of the Acts. The record from this point is the story of the advancing tide of witnessing for the Master, first in Judæa, then in ever widening circles, until the close of the book finds the Apostle Paul in the capital city of Rome. They are almost the last recorded words of Christ before he went from the earth. They set forth the supreme duty of the Christian as an individual, and of companies of Christians in groups of every sort. They go to the very heart of the matter. It is easy to substitute unessentials for essentials. Many things are good and useful; some are vital. The age in which we live is impatient with trifles, insistent upon realities. Sometimes it makes mistakes in its evaluations, but on the whole there is much to be said for its point of view in this regard. It is almost incredible that a few hundred years ago great scholars were using time and strength in debating points which today are seen to be unworthy of either. The road is strewn with discarded questions in religious thinking as well as in other realms. It is clear that we may go through certain observances with a degree of propriety. We may avow our allegiance to a body of formulated truth which we denominate a creed. We may do much, and profess much, but unless there be very definitely in our lives that of which the Master speaks in the text, it may all be "sounding brass and a clanging cymbal."

What is a witness? One who bears testimony and furnishes evidence; one who tells of something of which he knows by personal observation or experience; one who has seen something, has heard something, has experienced something of which

he can give personal testimony — that is a witness, and that is what the Master means. Moreover he tells us that such testimony is to be *with power*; not some feeble and formal fact, but something of vitality, something accomplishing, a witness with power.

An American once went with an English friend to hear Charles Spurgeon in his pulpit in London. When they left the church the American spoke no word of comment. Finally his friend said: "Well, what did you think of him?" "Think of whom?" said the American. "Why, Spurgeon." "Well," said the American, "to tell the truth I was not thinking of Spurgeon. I was thinking of his Master."

Suppose we put it in this way. That to which disciples in that early day, that to which we disciples in this later day are summoned, is so to speak, so to act, so to live, that when men meet us or think of us they may think of Christ, of the mind, the spirit, which was in him, of his way of life, of his animating purpose. To use the language of Scripture, that men shall "take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus."

A high ideal, this, one of which we hesitate to speak, so conscious are we of our own weaknesses and faults and failures, our wanderings from the way which we know but too often do not take.

But simply to say that one must witness for Christ is indefinite after all. The conception needs to be bounded if it is to be practical for everyday living; and it is to the great business of living that we are all committed, everyday living in an everyday world. Let us ask ourselves, therefore, how we are likely to know any great living fact? For example, we speak of rose life. What do we know of rose life? Nothing, in the last analysis, except what we know in the manifestations of that life. We see a flower with a fragrance which we have learned to call the fragrance of the rose. The flower has a form which we have learned to characterize as the form of a rose. It has a color which we have marked in the flower to which has been given the name of rose. Is there meaning in this for our thought? The Master said, "By their fruits ye

shall know them." The Apostle speaks of the "fruit of the spirit." To define the spirit of witnessing by its manifestations may help to clarify the conception of witnessing with power. If we are witnesses with power for Jesus Christ, the testimony of our lives will be characterized by these factors at least: by wisdom, by faith, by courage, by love.

The testimony will be characterized by *wisdom*. Long ago one said of wisdom: "She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her." Without going into the definition of the wisdom to which the writer of the Proverbs specifically refers, we may use the word with its usual meaning. Do we need wisdom as witnesses?

Wisdom is greatly needed in the differentiation of alleged truth from real truth. Sore perplexity is in the minds and hearts of men. Shall we accept alleged new truth just because it is new? The great scientist, Dr. Robert Andrews Millikan, recently said: "Eternal truth has been discovered in the past; it is being discovered now; it will continue to be discovered. In spite of all the new discoveries, there is a truth in the past which cannot be ignored nor brushed aside. Much of the knowledge of the past is still eternal truth. There are persons who are hypnotized by anything that is new because of its newness. There are crowds that hang behind, that cannot break away at all from the past; there are others who want to break completely with it, who call it a pack of lies. Neither of them has any conception of what it is all about."

Shall we reject alleged new truth just because it is new? That would be just as false an attitude as is the other. Where should we be today in any realm of knowledge if this attitude had been taken? "There is yet more light to break out of God's word," and that is true, not only of his printed word but also of the word which he has spoken in the material world, as everywhere else in the universe.

Neither accept nor reject anything simply because it is new. The true attitude is different from either; it is that of the open-minded seeker after truth. With patience, with reverence, with freedom from prejudice, let us follow on after truth, with

prayer to him who is King of the kingdom of the truth, that he will teach us to distinguish in the babel of many voices which are the voices to which we should give heed.

In another matter we need wisdom: in the utilization of latent capacity and power. This is true of the individual and of groups of individuals, such as we have in our churches. There are men and women with capacity for great achievement, with notable powers of leadership, with significant opportunities for usefulness, frittering away their lives in aimless or unaccomplishing inertia. They might do so much; they do so little! And oftentimes it is not a matter of indifference, but because they do not know how.

Stand on the upper suspension bridge at Niagara and look down at the deep flowing stream, in which, so engineers tell us, is latent power enough to drive every wheel in every mill in every hamlet and village and city in the land. Then see that comparatively little stream shoot out across the current, the stream which comes through the tunnel, a stream so insignificant in comparison with the mighty power of the river itself. It is a picture of the unutilized as contrasted with the utilized power in many a human life, and in many a church as well. How much we might do! How comparatively little we do, because we do not know how!

There is yet another sphere in which we sorely need wisdom, — in the contact of personalities. How inadequate is our knowledge, each of the other. We do not carry our wounds on the outside. With what blundering fingers we sweep the heartstrings of others, and they sweep ours, wounding unintentionally and often so sorely. There is no more beautiful grace in human nature than the grace of courtesy, sympathy with the self-respect of those with whom we come into contact. In our relationship with others we might well use the prayer of the publican of old, "God be merciful to me," a fool.

Again, we shall not be witnesses with power, without *faith*. We need humble faith in ourselves, leading to such a development of body and mind and spirit that we shall have self-respect, and, with that self-respect, confidence in our ability

to meet in some degree the demands which the pressure and exigencies of life make upon us.

Of body, I say. He whose time is given up to the cultivation of the physical side will probably amount to very little in the realm of great and lasting achievement, but he who neglects his bodily powers will go through life with heavy handicap, and will greatly increase the probability of irreparable failure. The great master of literature makes one of his characters say, in *As You Like It*:

Though I look old, yet am I strong and lusty;  
For in my youth I never did apply  
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood;  
Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo  
The means of weakness and debility;  
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,  
Frosty, but kindly . . .

And what is true of the body is true of the mind. It is the well-disciplined mind, the mind accustomed to face hard problems and to conquer them, which works quickly and smoothly and powerfully. There are minds so judicial, so nearly unerring in the movement of the working of the machinery of thoroughly trained mental powers, that their conclusions are almost certain to be warranted and accurate. This never comes by accident.

Beyond all this is that faith in ourselves which comes with the conviction of our own integrity. In this it is difficult to deceive ourselves. When a man knows that deep down in the secret places of his being his purpose is pure and his motives are high, he can walk among his fellow men gently and unobtrusively, but with face and conscience unafraid.

"My strength is as the strength of ten,  
Because my heart is pure."

We must have faith in people, too. Many of them we can trust, many more than we sometimes think. It was said of Robert Louis Stevenson that people were always at their best



when he was with them. Cynicism, suspicion, hatred, take their own toll. Not only do they break the great laws of human nature, but they break the one who cherishes and practices them. "He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen," and there can be no love without a goodly measure of faith.

But above humble faith in ourselves and genuine faith in people is a higher and more vital aspect of faith — faith in him to whom we give loving allegiance, faith in God. If any one of us is a stronger man than another, if he has more beneficent power over other men than have others, if he is one of those men who stand out among other men with something of the eternal power of the hills, so that other men rest their lives on him, it is because deep down in that man's life the eyes of his heart have been enlightened to see God. He will have humble faith in himself; he will have real faith in the people; but beyond that he will have deep and abiding faith in God.

I love to think that the heart of a believer was in a man like Abraham Lincoln. He walked through those dark and terrible days of war like a shepherd before his flock. He stood in the midst of those surging seas like a great rock on whose base the waves vainly broke. "Foursquare he stood to every wind that blew." And why? Because his heart rested upon God. At one time Governor Yates of Illinois wrote a most despairing letter to the great man whose patient heart still believed, and Lincoln sent back to the Governor, his personal friend, this message: "Dick, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord."

Have we ever thought what a change it would make if we believed God with the belief that has to do with everyday living, so that the thought of him would be to our lives as is the atmosphere, always and ever present, so that these lives of ours, in no slavish fear but in love and in reverence, would be consciously lived in his sight and by his power?

It is the man of faith who has that which will carry him through to the end, when others go down in wreckage and in confessed defeat. That picture is very dear to me which a great writer has drawn of the old age of John Milton, sitting

in his gray coat at the door of his house in Bunhill Fields. This is the description: "The whole spectacle of ancient civilization — its cities, its camps, its landscapes — was before him. There he sat in his gray coat, like a statue cut in granite. He repented nothing, repented of nothing. England had made a sordid failure, but he had not failed. His soul's fellowship was with the great republicans of Greece and Rome, and with the Psalmist and Isaiah and Oliver Cromwell.

The man of faith is the man whose testimony is with power.

And again, the testimony of power will be a testimony which is marked by *courage*. In a great passage in the first chapter of the Apostle Peter's second letter, we have the representation of a leader who is calling out, so to speak, the instruments in an orchestra. The language in the original of the passage bears out such a representation. He says: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love." The possession and presence of these factors in character lead to fruitfulness in the knowledge and service of Christ.

Mark what "these things" are of which he speaks. The first is faith; but after faith, then what? "Add to your faith, virtue." And what is virtue? The word means manliness, valor, courage. Faith first, then courage. It was Peter who wrote the words. We might have known it. He writes out of the bitterness of his own experience. Bold, daring, impulsive, Peter always was. Courageous, with a real courage, he had proved himself not to be in a time of crisis. Depend upon it, he was looking back to that fatal night when he denied his Master, when he went down like a poltroon at the question of a servant girl. Out of his own experience he was speaking. He knew how the sudden stress of temptation had come upon him, and how his heart had turned to water in cowardice and denial.

Perhaps he remembered something else; how, after the Spirit of power had come upon him with the others at Pentecost, he and John, his fellow disciple, had stood before the Sanhedrin,

the supreme council of the Jews, and how he had said: "If we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole; be it known unto you all and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole. He is the stone which was set at naught of you, the builders, which is become the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."

It sounds easy enough to say it today, with twenty centuries of Christian history behind us; but what of saying it in that day, before that high council, already perhaps uneasy in the thought that they had done an unjust and heinous thing in demanding the death of the one of whom the Roman governor had said: "I find no fault in him." I love to think of the man who stood there that day, winning his spurs in the knighthood of the Kingdom of God.

And not without significance it is that the Sanhedrin recognized the power of association, and that when they beheld the lionlike courage of Peter and John, fearing no face of man, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled, and they "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." They recognized the symptoms. They had observed the Nazarene. No clearer indication could be given of the impression which the Master made upon his own day and generation.

How much do we dare for Christ? Are we thinking of ourselves in self-congratulatory terms as being brave; when really we are cowardly? How much courage is in us when subjected to careful analysis and evaluation? How much courage to hold to the old, when the old is true? How much courage to be hospitable to the new, when the new is true? How much courage to grapple with and to conquer the evil within us, though dear as life itself? How much courage to battle with the evil without us?

In a world none too friendly to the coming of the Kingdom of God, how much courage in the sacrifice of popularity to conviction in the maintenance of principles and causes which make for righteousness? How much courage to live our own lives without submitting to the dictates of fashion or to the compulsion of the crowd? How much courage to live among men, having compassion upon the multitude, steadily walking in the way of him who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, when we would fain walk in our own way, without helping to bear the burdens of others? The witness with power will be characterized by courage, and we would best study the bearing of that term upon our everyday lives.

And in a word, he will be most truly a witness for Christ with power who has in his heart and who manifests in his life that which above all else characterized the Master, that *love* which breathed through all his contact with the world of mankind. What can I do better than to quote the incomparable "Hymn of Love" which the great apostle left to us as perhaps his greatest bequest:

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, and a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. . . . But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

So I come back to my first proposition, that if we are to be

witnesses with power for Jesus Christ, the testimony of our lives will be marked by these factors at least, by wisdom, by faith, by courage, by love, when the Spirit of God has come upon us.

There can be no real likeness to the character of Christ, no real possession and manifestation of his spirit, save as we know what it is to company with him. There can be no higher ambition for one who loves the Master and who desires to carry his spirit into a world which so sorely needs him, than to live in constant association with him. Let me quote from lines called "The Secret," written by Ralph Cushman, with whom some of us have held high converse in the things of the Spirit:

I met God in the morning,  
When my day was at its best,  
And his presence came like sunrise,  
Like a glory in my breast.

All day long the Presence lingered,  
All day long he stayed with me,  
And we sailed in perfect calmness  
O'er a very troubled sea.

Other ships were blown and battered,  
Other ships were sore distressed,  
But the winds that seemed to drive them  
Brought to us a peace and rest.

Then I thought of other mornings,  
With a keen remorse of mind,  
When I too had loosed the moorings  
With the Presence left behind.

So I think I know the secret,  
Learned from many a troubled way:  
You must seek him in the morning  
If you want him through the day! <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by permission of the author.

**THE RADIANT LIFE**

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## THE RADIANT LIFE

*Moses wist not that his face shone.*—Exodus 34:29.

WE meet people now and then who seem to think that Christian life is pale and thin, dull and drab, cold and negative. How little they know! Where have they been? They are as far from the truth as the North Pole is from the South Pole.

They never got that idea from the Bible. It is filled to the brim with the record of men and women who by faith subdued kingdoms and wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions and turned back the armies of evil. It is a story of high adventure and moral heroism. The Master came not to lop off and cut out, not to dilute and tone down—he came that we might have life which is life indeed, and that we might have it to the full. The most radiant thing the sun shines on is a genuinely Christian life.

Here in this short story where my text stands, we find a man coming down the mountainside. He had been at the top. In his outlook upon life, he had been twenty thousand feet above the level of the sea where those other Israelites were splashing about. He had gained such an open vision of spiritual reality, that it seemed to him that he had been speaking with the Lord face to face. He had seen those principles of righteousness which underlie all human well-being—principles having to do with the sacredness of life and purity, truth and property, family peace and personal honor. He had seen each one prefaced by a "Thou shalt" from on high. He had seen them all as plainly as if they had been written out on the rocks by the finger of the Lord. And all that had lifted him to such a level of thought and feeling, that as he came down the mountainside his face was radiant.

"But Moses wist not that his face shone." That was the



beauty of it and the secret of it. If he had been thinking about it, it would not have shone. The man who goes about saying to himself, "What a wonderful fellow I am!" will have no more light in his face than one would find on the surface of a Hubbard squash. Self-consciousness is never a sign of health; it is a symptom of weakness. Here was the unconscious radiance of a life that had forgotten all about itself in yielding itself utterly to the will of God. When any life reaches the point where it can honestly say, "I came not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me," it takes on another look. It is lighted up from within by the sense of mission.

Let me come, however, to closer grips with that text — just how did the man's face get that way? I should say that these three factors entered into it:

First, he was a man with a social vision. He had once been watching his flocks on the slopes of that same Mount Horeb where we find him here. He had been reckoning up, perhaps, in terms of wool and mutton, the returns which would come to him from all those sheep. Suddenly he saw the bushes around him burning with a mysterious fire and turned aside to see the strange sight.

Then there came to him a voice from the Unseen, saying, "I am God! I am the God of thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!" And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid. Then the Voice continued, "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt. I have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters. I know their sorrows. I am come down to deliver them. Come now, I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring them out."

He was called into the service of God by a direct appeal to his social sympathies. And the sense of shame over the wrong which was being done to his fellow countrymen and the sense of obligation to do something about it put a new light in his face which had not faded out when he came down the mountainside to the place where those same Israelites were now encamped.

Now is all that just ancient history? Not for a moment!

It has been reenacted in every generation from that day to this. It has been repeated wherever men and women have suffered hurt and loss by reason of their taskmasters, wherever the human values have gone down in defeat under the pressure of greed.

How are the working people getting along today in the cotton mills of Marion and Gastonia, North Carolina? How are the coalminers making out in Colorado, in West Virginia and in Pennsylvania? How are the garment workers faring in the city of New York? How are the unemployed men who have been walking our streets in these recent months, asking only for the chance to use their strength to earn their bread, coming on? Are the strong bearing the infirmities of the weak, according to the teaching of Christ, or are they in the main using the less fortunate to profit themselves? Are the human values still going down in this acquisitive society of ours because some men love money more than they love God? You know; I know; every one knows!

If we are to have a more democratic spirit in the control of the great industries; if we are to have a more equitable distribution of the good things in life among those who toil mainly with their hands and those who toil solely with their heads; if the "profit-motive," of which we hear so much, is to be subordinated to its rightful place and made to serve rather than to rule—we too must hear and heed that same voice from the Unseen which this man heard at the mountain top. And when any young man hears and heeds that call, his life will be no longer dull and drab; it, too, will be lighted up by a radiance from on high.

In the second place, this man had a far-reaching purpose. He wanted to get those Israelites out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage—and he did. We are told that the Red Sea opened before them when they made their escape. We are told that a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night guided them on their march toward the land of promise. We are told that in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, they were providentially supplied with the necessities of life. How

much of all this is poetry and how much of it prose, it is hard to say. It is not easy to draw a straight line between fact and symbol in many of these Old Testament narratives. Suffice it to say, the Israelites got out and were on their way to found a free Hebrew commonwealth where every man, woman and child would have a chance to live.

But that was not enough. The leader of that ancient labor movement would not allow them to make it merely a question of bread and butter, even if milk and honey were thrown in. He was bent on taking those principles of righteousness which he had seen at the mountain top and writing them, not on tables of stone but on the lives of men. He would have all of those people enter into newness of life, because the better social order which they were to build would demand a finer type of man to control it. "I will write my laws upon their hearts and put my truth in their inward parts." And that was the far-reaching purpose which fired the heart of this leader of men.

In the last analysis, the whole industrial problem — honest wages, reasonable hours, competent service, unemployment and all the rest — is at bottom a moral problem. What sort of men are to take command and sail the ship of state on all the high seas of our economic life? If greed and ill will, if hatred and selfish unconcern are to rule, it does not matter very much whether we live under a capitalist regime or a socialist regime or a communist regime. In any case, the big dogs will get the best bones, and the small dogs will stand around licking their chops and patiently waiting to take what is left. If, on the other hand, we are here to build a new social order grounded in the sense of human brotherhood, because we are striving to live in the filial spirit toward the one God and Father of us all, then that is another pair of shoes altogether.

"Men do not gather grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles." It cannot be done; it is contrary to the law of nature. Neither do men gather fine impulses from greedy souls; that also is contrary to the law of nature. We cannot make silk purses out of sows' ears, nor human brotherhood from swinish instincts. "Make the tree good and the fruit will be good."

Have the quality of inner life right, and all the expressions of that inner life in this intricate society of ours will be right.

All that might seem so plain as to go without saying. Alas, no! The streets are running with people who imagine that something external—some new piece of legislation, some fresh bit of political or economic technique—will change this world of ours and make it like heaven, while you and I and that man across the street remain just as selfish and sordid as we ever were. It cannot be done. For that better social order, new and finer people are needed. Another you, another I, another everybody! Then the Lord of life will be able to make all things new, and the glory of a redeemed society will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

“I will write my laws upon their hearts and put my truth in their inward parts.” When that far-reaching purpose which goes down to the root of the matter grips any life, it straightway becomes radiant by the presence of a finer quality of life within.

In the third place, this man had the spirit of self-sacrifice. Hear him pray! While he was at the mountain top, speaking with the Lord face to face, there had come a terrible falling away among the people he was set to lead. They had made for themselves a golden calf, like the sacred bulls which they had seen the rich and the great worshiping along the banks of the Nile. They had stripped off their clothes and were dancing naked before the hideous idol in a wild, pagan orgy. They were calling out to Aaron, “Up, make us gods to go before us! As for this Moses, we know not what has become of him.” They had stained the even virtue of their enterprise by groveling before that horrible image which they had set up.

Then we read that “the anger of the Lord was kindled against them.” He stood ready to destroy them all for their evil doing. But this man, who had undertaken to lead them into newness of life, drew near and said: “O Lord, these people have sinned a great sin! They have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive them! Forgive their iniquity! If not, blot me out of the book of life.”

"Blot me out," if need be, but spare them! He stood ready to give his life for theirs. Here he was, centuries before the coming of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah of whom the book of Isaiah has so much to say! Here he was, long centuries before the coming of "the Lamb of God" who was to "take away the sin of the world" by the sacrifice of himself! Yet even so, he was ready to be "wounded for their transgressions, bruised for their iniquities," that "by his stripes," they might be healed. Blot me out if need be, but forgive them! When any one is ready to suffer that others may be saved, there comes into his face that light which some of us have seen in the faces of people like Maud Ballington Booth and Bishop Brent and Wilfred Grenfell.

He that saves his life for private ends and personal gratification loses it. He finds presently, when he looks himself over, that he has no real life left. He is just an empty shell with nothing in it. He that invests his life for some high end, in the spirit of self-sacrifice, finds himself and saves his life. It is the everlasting paradox. We lose by saving and we save by losing. It is what Matthew Arnold called "the secret of Jesus."

When any man in his fight for clean politics, in his struggle for worthier industrial methods, in his contention for a finer quality of education, in his stand for more vital forms of religious faith, loses all thought of his personal advantage, he finds himself. If he reaches the point where he actually says in his whole bearing, "Blot me out if need be, but save those high ends which I am set to serve," there will come into his face also that "light which never was on sea or land."

Christian life dull and drab, pale and thin! Where have those people been? Tell them to read again the Book of Acts! Here is the record of what the spirit of Christ was doing in those days immediately following the death of Christ upon the cross! Lame men were set on their feet. Sinful men were turned around and faced toward the light. Property interests were administered in a more Christian way. The Spirit was poured out and every man heard the words of eternal life in the

tongue in which he was born. The ugly idols of wood and stone were thrown away, as men saw the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Men were sailing the high seas, carrying the good news of redemption everywhere.

The book is well named — it is indeed a *book of acts*. Men were doing something, and the sheer joy of it caused their faces to shine with a radiance which the world at large had never seen before.

“ So let the way wind up the hill or down,  
    Though rough the road the journey will be joy,  
    Still seeking what I sought when but a boy, —  
New friendships, high adventure and a crown.  
    I shall grow old but never lose life's zest,  
    Because the road's last turn will be the best.”



## **SUCCESS AND FAILURE**



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## SUCCESS AND FAILURE

*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.*—Philippians 3:13.

“BRETHREN, I count not myself to have apprehended,” or, we may loosely phrase it, I do not claim to have succeeded. Here, then, is a frank confession of failure. Moreover, it is a reiterated confession of failure. In the preceding verse, the apostle has said, “Not as though I had already attained”; or, as we might say, “Not as though I had arrived.” Here is a man who says in effect, twice over, “I feel that I have failed.” Again, this is a confession of final failure. If the man has not yet succeeded, then he has no chance to succeed; for he is now an old man. He has come to the end of his life. And he knows that he has come to the end of it, and that its story has been told.

And yet, this confession of failure produces no depression on the man who makes it. It is not with a sigh but with something very much akin to a shout that he says, “I have not succeeded.” There is no minor or melancholy note to be found in this letter of the apostle. On the contrary, no portion of the New Testament so throbs with hope and joy and inward satisfaction as this very epistle in which the writer makes a reiterated confession of a final and irreparable failure.

What is the explanation of this apparent contradiction? We do not get at the heart of it if we say, Here was a man who was strong enough to rise above his failures. We get at the heart of it only as we discover that the secret of his satisfaction lay in the thing he had failed to achieve. To understand how this man could say “I have failed” and “I rejoice,” almost in the same breath, we must find out what he had attempted to do, what it was that he felt he had not succeeded in doing. What was the goal at which he felt he had not arrived?

We find our answer in this very chapter. In the preceding verses he had written: "that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." This was his ambition and it had not been satisfied; this was his goal and he had not reached it; to this he had aspired, and in this he felt he had failed. But there was a confession of failure that could be made not only without humiliation but with pride; not only without regret, but with satisfaction; not only without bitterness, but with positive joy.

For—and here is the gist of what the passage says to us—the only way to know real joy and permanent satisfaction is to fail in reaching something that is beyond us rather than to succeed in doing something that lies within our reach. What we succeed in doing does not cause us to rejoice—for long. It may produce a momentary exhilaration but not a permanent satisfaction. The moment we arrive anywhere, that moment we want to go on. We cry "Eureka" in one breath but "Excelsior" in the next. It is one of the noblest things in us, this sense of a beyond which constantly beckons and lures us onward. In nothing do our souls show their kinship with God more than in the limitlessness of their aspirations. "I shall be satisfied," cried the Psalmist, "(only) when I awake in thy likeness." The glory of our humanity is discovered in this: that it is never content with what it can attain. "Give me an idea," wrote a great German, "that I can feed on. My mind has an intolerable hunger, and my soul has an unquenchable thirst." An idea which the mind can grasp does not satisfy it. An ambition which a man can realize does not satisfy him either.

This sense of dissatisfaction with the attainable is the mark of a man: the very divine imprint and inbreathing. It is to man's everlasting honor that he sets his ideal so high that he

dooms himself to failure. There is that faculty in us which sends us in quest of distant ideals, which bids us not to tarry in the attained or in the attainable but to seek and to strive for what lies beyond our reach and eludes our grasp. And joy comes in thus seeking to attain the unattainable. Dissatisfaction creeps over a man the moment he is content to stop striving and to settle down on what he has succeeded in doing. The happy people are those who fail in striving to reach the mountain tops; the unhappy people are those who are content to camp at points which are easily reached. We sum up the whole truth of this in a word: The only real way to succeed is to fail; the only real way to fail is to succeed.

The proof of this paradox lies in the field of biography. How much of biography do you read? No kind of reading, perhaps, is more worth while; for in it we discover the art of living. Did you ever read the story of the life of any one who was content to score a cheap and easy success in life; who set his ideal so low that he could reach it, possess it, and repose on it — who could in any real sense be called a truly happy man? Always in such a case we come upon a note of melancholy, of dissatisfaction, of disillusionment. His very outward success has produced an inward sense of unworthiness and of moral failure.

On the other hand, have you ever read the story of a life that failed in reaching some distant and shining goal, without discovering within it a subtle joy, a secret satisfaction, an immense inward kind of contentment? You cannot put your finger on a saint, a prophet, a spiritual pioneer, in the Bible or out of it, who does not in effect say at the end of his life, "I have failed." But in the very confession of his failure, you feel that there lies the secret of his joy: the everlasting success of souls that have failed.

"Speak History! Who are life's victors? Unroll thy long annals and say.

Are they those whom the world called the victors, who won the success of a day?

The martyrs, or Nero? The Spartans who fell at Thermopylæ's tryst,  
Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges or Socrates? Pilate or Christ? "

Do you remember that poem of Browning, entitled "Old Pictures in Florence"? The poet had wandered through the Florentine galleries, looked upon the various specimens of medieval art to be found there. And his mind went away from it, right back to the classic art of Greece. This had a perfection which the medieval pictures could not hope to attain. The Greek works were so finished, they were absolutely the last word. And yet, says the art critic, the Greeks were able to attain that completeness and perfection just because their range was limited and their view was finite. For centuries, artists rested in the old perfection. They were content to imitate the classical model. At length Giotto and the rest ventured to leave the few types which were so familiar in Greek art and to paint men with all the passions, all the hopes and fears and aspirations that swept the world in the Renaissance. And in comparison with the old Greek perfection, they failed. There is no doubt of it. There is no comparison when you come to the perfection of art work between the old Greek masters and the early medieval artists. Yet, how much nobler the failure to realize their own vision of man, as they felt him and knew him, than the success of copying the models of the ancient perfection.

The experience of the great explorers is identical with that of the great artists. Do you read Parkman, whose works are rightly called history yet read like romance? He tells the story of LaSalle, who aspired to reach not America but China. It was to reach China that LaSalle crossed the untracked Atlantic and explored his way up the uncharted St. Lawrence. China ever gleamed before him. His companions mocked him. The great rapids above terrified them. They told LaSalle that that was the only China he would ever see. In derision they called the place Lachine, LaSalle's China, and there the

name stands today: the Lachine Rapids. Well, that was the only China LaSalle ever saw. But how much nobler to have failed to reach China than merely to have succeeded in discovering Montreal!

Or consider the career of Robert Owen, the great philanthropist and socialist. Here was a man who was born a poor tailor's apprentice and became one of the most successful manufacturers in England. Beginning with a borrowed capital of five hundred pounds, he became one of the wealthiest men of his time. But this "success" did not satisfy the soul of Robert Owen.

He became interested in social reform work. He began the agitation which led to the passing of the first factory act of Sir Robert Peel in 1802. The suffering of the children moved his great humane heart to pity. He sought to impress men of wealth with the pitiful waste of human life as he saw it. His mind was constantly occupied with plans for practical, constructive philanthropy, on a scale theretofore unattempted. He founded the benevolent community at New Lanark, he shortened hours of labor, introduced sanitary reform, established infant schools. He anticipated most of the social reforms of the nineteenth century. Yet in spite of these philanthropies, his mills made enormous profits. If Robert Owen had died in 1829, he would have been remembered as one of the most successful men of his time.

But Owen's idea was not to be remembered as a "successful" man; and so he went on to make what men called then, what men call today, a monumental failure. He came to feel that the trouble with society lay at the bottom and not at the top; that not charity but reconstruction was what the social order needed. Starting out to ameliorate conditions, he discovered that he could never give men what they really needed—liberty. "The people," he cried, "are the slaves of my mercy." So he became an apostle of communism; he dreamed of an ideal cooperative commonwealth. He came to feel that private property is incompatible with social well-being. All people, he felt, in order to live equally happy and equally moral

lives must have equal opportunities and resources. He gave up his great philanthropies in England. He came over to America and set up the first communistic community at New Harmony. And it failed. And he failed. The world has long since written Failure, as its only epitaph for Robert Owen. At the end of his life, when he was seventy years old, a man said to him, "Well, Mr. Owen, who is your disciple? How many will remain to profess your views after you are gone?" And Mr. Owen answered, "Not one." But he did not say it with a sigh. He had failed and he knew that he had failed, but he knew something else: he knew that he had made a splendid failure. And he would rather have failed in laying, as he certainly did lay, the foundations of a new social morality, than have succeeded in doing anything else. Owen's theories may go; his form of social reconstruction may not survive. But his love for men, his passion for social justice, which he preached with the ardor of a prophet and the fervor of a saint — these remain as the spiritual impulses, the moral motives, that one day will produce the new social order for which we wait.

In the light of these and other examples, what shall we say of the tragedy of a conventional success as we see it and know it? We speak about tragic failures, but these are not to be compared with the tragic successes of life. The thing to be afraid of is not that we shall fail but that we shall be content with cheap and easy successes. Our times offer the choice of so many lesser and yet considerable goods that we find it peculiarly tempting and easy to sacrifice the highest to what, after all, is only indifferent good. It mightily concerns the earnest person that he should overcome this deadly peril of the lower attainment. We must scorn being just prosperous, just respectable, just mediocre, just successful, according to conventional standards. Any one with decent luck can do that. But after he has done it, he will find no real satisfaction in it. He may say "I have arrived," but there will be no note of joy in it. The great trouble with our time is the number of people who have made a tragic failure of their lives in just this

way. The times cry aloud for men and women who despise the thing that they can grasp and can become; who prefer to fail in aspiring to the thing which in their own souls they know is the thing which they ought to be and which they ought to do:

“That low man sees a little thing to do,  
Sees it and does it;  
This high man with a great thing to pursue  
Dies ere he knows it.”

In one of our periodicals,<sup>1</sup> there was published at the Commencement season, an imaginary conversation between a father and son. The father asks his son what he is going to do on graduating. The boy replies that he hopes to get a job and make good. But the father presses him as to what he means by making good:

“Is there anything that you have got to do in this world, whether society likes it or not; got to do in order to fulfill some great compelling force within you? And if you haven’t, then you are only half a man, with no moral dignity — a worthless, spineless bit of human straw, whirled this way and that by what the bellowing crowd is crying in the market-place. Has college standardized you? Has it stood you in a mold, made conventional and neat and proper your ideas of life? Or has there come from somewhere some thought or hope of something different, more true, more genuine, more joyful — if you want to put it that way — than what you and I and the alumni of all our universities, for the most part, have come to regard as the safe and sane norm of excellence — a tailor-made pattern, all alike and so deadly dull?” The son says: “Don’t you like the college mold and standards? They’re not so bad.” The father says, “That’s just the trouble. It’s not the character of the mold; it’s having one at all. It is the everlasting conformity to what the crowd, the better crowd, thinks and feels and acts. . . . I’m well along in years. My clothes fit well. I do not have to worry about taxes and insurance bills; but I’m

<sup>1</sup> *New Republic*, June 1926.



wondering if I haven't missed something; and if I have, I do not want you to miss it too."

He had missed something. He had missed about the best thing in life. He had missed the joy of which Galsworthy sings:

Come let us lay a crazy lance in rest  
And tilt at windmills under a wild sky.

Florence Ripley Mastin has described this kind of living in her lines:

I cannot help but love the knight who goes,  
Unchampioned, derided by his foes  
And friends, to seek the white star of his dream  
In the black night. He only sees the gleam;  
And, heeding neither laughter nor the sneers  
Of sane complacency, his course he steers  
Into the starless skies. Perchance for him  
The gleam will never out of darkness swim.  
Yet better, dream-possessed, to falter down  
In failure than to snicker like a clown  
Over the dream. God give us grace to see  
The grandeur in the soul of errantry!

And this is the glory of our Christianity: that it offers men an unattainable ideal, in striving to reach which they know a greater joy than they can realize in any other way. It is sometimes said that the Christian ideal is a beautiful and noble ideal, but that it is impracticable. My answer is, That is just the beauty of it. A religion that is no higher than a man's head, no higher than his grasp, is not a religion that can satisfy his aspiring soul. I am sometimes asked if I practice what I preach. I answer, I do not; for if I could practice what I preach, I should be preaching something mean and mediocre. The faith which Christ offers us is the highest of all faiths; for he holds up before us the unattainable ideal of his own perfection, and at the same time he gives us the ambition constantly to strive after it. "We may fail a thousand times, but as long as we are ashamed of our shortcomings, so long as we do not hopelessly acquiesce in them, so long as we do not try

to comfort ourselves by a careful parade of our other virtues, we are in the pilgrim road." No one ought to be ashamed of his failure to be a Christian. He ought to be ashamed of succeeding in being anything else.

Our God, we may be sure of this, cares infinitely more for our high failures than for our easy successes. Earthly parents do. I remember once inquiring of a mother about her child, then in her early teens. The mother spoke casually, almost carelessly, of her daughter's good school record, her conventional successes. Then, after a moment's hesitation, she took from her desk a sheet of paper and showed it to me. There was a child's poem, apostrophizing the first snowstorm of the winter. As a poem it was a failure, with its halting rhyme and faltering rhythm. But her mother prized the failure of her child to describe the beauty which she had seen and felt beyond the ability just to get good marks at school. Even so, we must believe, God turns away without finding satisfaction in these lesser and lower successes of ours — the things we succeed in doing, the things we succeed in being — just because the things are so little worth doing and so little worth being. But he pauses with tenderness and joy when he sees a child of his who has caught the vision of his perfect righteousness; who aspires to know Christ, to lay hold on him, to know the power which is in his resurrection, to share in his sufferings; and then, just because he has known such an ambition, inevitably falls short of attainment and fails to reach his goal. Verily, verily, I say unto you, there is more joy in the presence of the angels of God over one who fails in such an endeavor than over ninety and nine just persons who never made it.

In the business of living, it is necessary to take a long look ahead. The thing most to be desired, I suppose, is that when we are done with it, we shall be able to look back upon it with satisfaction and inward contentment. And there is no satisfaction comparable to that of having striven for, though we have failed to reach, the highest ideals in character and in service. We must infinitely prefer to make a noble failure than to make an ignoble success. We must be able to say with

St. Paul, and to say it with rejoicing, "I have not attained, I count not myself to have apprehended," because we have been seeking to attain nothing short of the perfection of Christ, to apprehend nothing less than the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## **THE NEED OF BRAINS IN RELIGION**

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## THE NEED OF BRAINS IN RELIGION

FROM our youth up we have heard sermons urging us to give our hearts to God, but how many of us ever heard a sermon urging us to give our heads to God? This morning let us turn our thought to that. Goodness alone is not enough. A too popular note sounds through contemporary Christianity, seeming to imply that, if everybody were good, all would be well. Indeed, it may be that some of us now are thinking if everybody were good all would be well. Never! Goodness alone is not enough for anything.

Obviously it took more than goodness to harness steam and electricity, discover the universal laws, spy out the stars, and swing the gateway of our scientific age; it took intelligence too. This morning let us see that the same truth applies to those more inward and personal realms where religion moves. Goodness alone is not enough.

This is Washington's Birthday. From our infancy we have had impressed upon us the integrity of his character. He has been used, as Lincoln has been used, as an encouragement to goodness. So familiar is that emphasis and so agreed are we all about it that we may be pardoned for not repeating it. We are fortunate among the nations in having for the natural centers of our patriotic reverence personalities of whose moral quality we never need be ashamed. It took more, however, than goodness to found the American Republic. Read the story of the founders — Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, the Adams family, Marshall, and the like — and see if the impression does not grow that goodness alone would have taken them only a little way. They put their intelligence into the task. Some of the best brains in history went into the founding of the nation. To paraphrase the Master's words, they loved

this country with all their hearts and with all their souls and with all their minds.

You see, we always have been told that intelligence without goodness is a public calamity. Well, it is. The most dangerous enemies of society are not the stupid but the astute, the clever, the ingenious, who combine a high I. Q. with a low morality. That familiar emphasis we take for granted at the very start. I personally have seen a Phi Beta Kappa man selling shoestrings on the Bowery for the drinks. Little good his brains did him without character!

This morning, however, we turn to the less familiar but no less true emphasis, that if intellect without goodness is a calamity, so is goodness without intellect. One of the profoundest needs of this country in general and its religion in particular is dedicated brains.

If, now, somebody is saying, This surely is not the historic emphasis of the church and it will be a task to find a text for it in the New Testament, of course the answer is that the whole New Testament is a running commentary on it. The men who withstood and crucified Jesus, the men who fought against the liberal policy of Paul, putting Gentiles and Jews upon an equality in the Christian church, were not bad people. They were good men and women, conscientious, zealous, enthusiastic. Listen to Paul himself as he describes them in the tenth chapter of his letter to the Romans: "I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."<sup>1</sup> Zeal without knowledge, good intention without good intelligence, religious conscientiousness and enthusiasm without brains to guide them — of what disaster have not these things been the fruitful mothers! One sees in imagination the religious persecutors under whom men like Galileo were threatened or like Bruno burned. I bear them witness that they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. One sees in imagination the old ascetic saints deserting the world to immolate themselves and crucify their bodies, some St. Simeon Stylites nearly forty years upon his pillar, or the innumerable scorched and

<sup>1</sup> v. 2.

starved fanatics in the Egyptian desert. I bear them witness that they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

One remembers the superstitious fears that for centuries haunted the imagination of the pious, the pursuit of the devil, the dread of hell, the horror of comets, the endless and implacable wrath of God — what a tyranny of terror! I bear them witness that they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. One thinks of emotional orgies all the way from the mob hysterics of medieval Christianity to the carefully engineered mass movements of some modern revivalists where the end of all effort is feeling, feeling that rising like a storm under a temporary wind dies down when the wind is gone. I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

We say that science needs intelligence. But science never has to deal with such floodtides of emotional driving power as religion characteristically creates. It is the very genius of religion to produce zeal. Without intelligence to guide it, therefore, religion easily becomes one of the major curses of the people. As Jesus said, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!"<sup>2</sup> Aye, if your religious zeal be ignorantly managed, the end is calamity. My soul! Look about you and see.

In the first place, let us strike a positive note about this. What a step forward mankind does take when high religion and high intelligence are blended! Nothing on earth can withstand that combination. There rises among us now, I think, a new order of sainthood. I am not sure that we can keep the word "saint" for common use, so has it deteriorated in public estimation. Ask a youth whether he wants to be a saint and the vehemence of his denial will be proportioned to the degree of his acquaintance with you. He is sure to make it as emphatic as he can. No wonder! Who wants to imitate those pallid and emaciated figures, in terms of whom ecclesiastical tradition and popular imagination have generally pictured saintliness? Even great souls like St. Francis of Assisi, the

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 6:23.



hem of whose garment we are not worthy to touch, we honor in spirit but do not follow in detail. Old styles in saintliness, like other outgrown fashions, have departed from our ambition and desire.

Nevertheless, a new order of sainthood rises which will more than repair the loss if we understand and welcome it: men and women, namely, in whom a reverent and unselfish spirit is combined with a scientific technique. Never before in history was there the possibility of that combination. Now we may have it if we will, a reverent and unselfish spirit married to a scientific technique. The future of mankind depends on that.

Two elements are there, one very old, as old as Micah, saying, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"<sup>3</sup> — as old as Christ, saying, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."<sup>4</sup> And the other element is very new: scientific technique based on knowledge of law-abiding processes, so that one can fulfill conditions and get results. On the one side is a religious spirit of devotion and service; on the other side are the tools that modern intelligence puts at the disposal of the mind. Give us shining personalities in whom these two are blended and we shall yet be crying, The saints are dead; long live the saint!

Here, for example, is my friend, a physician and psychiatrist now fallen on sleep. To him personality was sacred. He was a man of reverence and kindness. He handled people as though they were the sons of God. But he was also a scientist, a pioneer in his realm, a man of skill and intellect. What a marriage was there of brain and spirit, and how many he lifted up from the sloughs of their despond to be reconstructed personalities! The future depends on that blending of the religious spirit with intelligence.

Or here is a man like Louis Braille, accidentally struck blind in his third year. At the age of sixteen he had worked out his scientific alphabet, boldly directed, as Helen Keller says, to the fingers only and not to the eyes at all — one of the greatest

<sup>3</sup> Micah 6:8

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 25:40.

benefactors of the blind in history, who opened to the sightless all the accumulated treasures of man's thought. No ancient saint could have done that. That needed a devoted spirit plus the new technique.

Or here is a business man, of a type, more common than some people think — may heaven increase the number! — to whom business means mainly not the joy of acquiring but the joy of creating. To create a business that opens opportunity to men, so that it makes both money and manhood, and ministers to the welfare of all who are concerned in it and served by it — that also springs from the marriage of fine spirit and good brains. Such business men, though they may never be called saints, are more valuable to the community than all the ascetics who ever left the world to save their souls.

Now, in this union between high spirit and high intelligence lies one of the major problems of the modern church. In the generation just past, the church has suffered two great losses: first, the workingmen who have deserted the churches in droves because they thought, often with too much justification, that we were not interested in their vital problems; and second, men and women of intellectual leadership who left us because they thought us mentally belated, hopelessly obsolete in doctrine and in practice. Which of those two losses is the more disastrous we need not now inquire, but concerning the latter this may be said: the divorce between the religion of a nation and its intelligence is a calamity than which nothing much worse can befall any people.

All the great ages of the past, like the Periclean Age in Greece or the thirteenth century in Europe, have been times when spiritual life and intelligence were united, and we never shall escape from our present moral chaos and inefficiency until that marriage can again be consummated.

All of which naturally heads up in a personal appeal. Give your hearts to God — yes, to be sure! No sensible person who knows life as a matter of experience or knows modern psychology as a matter of theory will ever depreciate the importance of the emotional life. It is our driving power. But

give your *heads* to God. No other type of personality is so valuable today as that in which the religious spirit of reverence and devotion is blended with intelligent technique in the helping of people and the building of a better world. That is the new order of sainthood. The whole earth rises or falls as we have more or less of that. And as for the churches, give us institutions in which religion is intelligent and intelligence is religious, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against them.

In the second place, let us carry this truth out from the more personal phase into our national situation. There is a common assumption behind much of our Christianity today, that if only all individuals were good we should have a good society. Of course that proposition cannot stand a moment's serious thought. Go up the river here and look at that tremendous bridge. Would you say that if all the individual atoms in the steel were good we should therefore have a good bridge? But those individual atoms are good. There is no trouble about the soundness of those constituent elements. The bridge, however, depended not only upon the soundness of the elements but upon the organization of them — upon a highly difficult and complicated engineering operation to bring them together — and that cost brains, finely trained and dedicated brains.

My friends, we must recapture that emphasis in our Christian campaign for a better world. To be sure, we cannot build anything good out of bad elements. That is primary. No organization of mud bricks will make a marble palace. Everything does go back to the quality of the individual. We must have good men to make a good society. But the kind of good man who does build a good society is not simply emotionally good — kind, generous, unselfish, honorable even — not simply that, but the kind of man who puts his head as well as his heart into his goodness.

If there were any human relationship in which goodness alone could be enough, it surely would be motherhood. Let any man talk of motherhood and he is likely to become emotional, not to say sentimental. How marvelous a thing is motherhood! Yet one who deals with the actual problem

of the family knows that it takes more than a good heart to make a good mother; it takes a good head. The major crimes of motherhood are not sins of bad motive but of bad judgment. You can fairly well trust nature to make a normal woman love her child, but what can we do to put at the disposal of American womanhood a trained intelligence to rear a child? All the stupid follies that most ruin children are being practiced on them now by mothers who dearly love them. It takes more than goodness to make a good mother; it takes an intelligent technique.

I call you to witness that this emphasis has been sadly lacking in the church. Two unfailing emphases we all have heard: first, the mystical — "Spirit of God, descend upon my heart," — and second, the ethical — "Till I die I will not put away mine integrity from me."<sup>5</sup> Two basic and indispensable emphases of all true religion! But there is a third without which we shall not get done some Christian tasks that belong to us.

The major problems of our national life today are problems in social engineering. Unemployment will not be solved nor insurance to cover it be devised by individual goodness only. That is going to take brains of the kind that business has so magnificently used for its own purposes, turned now to the solution of a social problem. The question of what we are going to do with this new giant power, let it be private and competitive or carry it over to a socially controlled, perhaps socially owned public utility, will not be answered by individual goodness. Some of the best brains in this nation ought to be expended on that.

The achievement of international peace is not by a long sea-mile a matter of individual goodness. That is the most stupendous problem in social engineering that mankind ever tried. And this entire matter of assimilating our new knowledge into a fresh religious world-view that will do justice to the new and still preserve the abiding values of the old is not a matter of individual goodness. There we must love the Lord our God with all our mind.

<sup>5</sup> Job 27:5

Wanted, therefore, brains! Wanted, Christians whose Christianity involves their heads! Wanted, preachers, too, who will indeed claim the hearts of the people for God but will also help to stop this regime of sentimentality in religion — zeal without knowledge, good intention without good intelligence. So much of our popular religion has been, as the common phrase has it, beautiful but dumb.

There is nothing in this church that encourages us much more than the sight of some of you teachers, physicians, nurses, business men, lawyers, social servants, parents, in whom fine workmanship, skilled competence, trained intelligence are part and parcel of your religion. So Jesus said his disciples should be — “wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”<sup>6</sup> Wisdom and kindness, the sagacity of the serpent and the gentleness of the dove, — that is an unconquerable combination. May this church find how to claim that and create it!

This is the first Sunday in Lent. Once more we have crossed the threshold of another season historically dedicated by the church to penitence and conversion of life. You know what conversion has often meant — an emotional experience, sometimes an agonizing upset of the feelings. Now, no sensible man will depreciate the importance of the feelings. Only the other day a counselor talking with a youth about his personal problem was met by the youth's retort. “See,” he said, “you are talking to me in terms of logic and here I am burning up with emotion.”<sup>7</sup> To be sure! Nor will any wise man suppose that intellect ever can suffice for religion. Fine intellect without fine feelings is in any realm a complete fiasco. This very Paul who protested against having a zeal for God not according to knowledge said also, “Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up.”<sup>8</sup>

While, however, we clearly recognize and gladly consent to all such qualifications upon our thought, it still remains true, especially about some of you young people here, that if you are to have a genuine conversion of life it is likely to start

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 10:16.

<sup>8</sup> I Corinthians 8:1, marginal reading.

<sup>7</sup> Personally related to Dr. Fosdick by Rabbi Krass.

with your head. That is where much of your trouble first begins.

Many years ago, at West Point, there was a betrayal which we remember yet with shame. We say that Benedict Arnold lost his character. Yes, but Benedict Arnold first lost his head. He was not simply a traitor to do what he did; he was a fool. Today much of our moral chaos is not a matter of bad-heartedness. Some of the wildest of our modern sinners have fine feelings, but in this chaos of conflicting codes and confused philosophies they have lost their heads.

Do you remember how Luther Burbank was converted to his life work? At the age of nineteen, still without schooling, he read Darwin's book, *Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication*. That does not sound emotional but it converted Luther Burbank. That is to say, it gave him his vision, his idea of what he was going to do with his life, around which he marshaled his ambitions and desires, to which he gave his devotion, and from which he never turned aside. "The whole world seemed placed on a new foundation,"<sup>9</sup> he said, after he had read the book.

May God grant some such experience to some youth here! I suspect that Burbank had some feeling about that. No man can have the whole world placed on a new foundation for him without having some feeling about it. But what really happened to Burbank was that he got a new idea of what his life could be.

My friends, that is precisely the meaning of Jesus' word for "repent" — *μετανοείτε*, change your mind — not necessarily get all hot and bothered, not by any means surrender yourself to the irrational sweep of mass emotion — *μετανοείτε*, change your mind. Get a new idea of what your life can mean. Quit these cheap philosophies that loosen and relax your character and end in disillusionment and cynicism. Quit losing your heads just because your generation happens to be confused. There are great ideas on which life can be lived and great ends to live it for. The world is too rich in notable biographies of

<sup>9</sup> Quoted by Walter B. Pitkin in *The Psychology of Achievement*, p. 302.

lives well lived on spacious lines to doubt that. I would that I might lift over the horizon of some youth's soul today a vision of those Christian ideas and goals, the acceptance of which does remake life! Repent. Change your mind.

“O God, I offer thee my heart —  
In many a mystic mood, by beauty led,  
I give my heart to thee. But now impart  
That sterner grace — to offer thee my head.”

### PRAYER

Eternal God, our Father, we beseech thee that thou wilt gather up our entire personalities into thy service. With all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our strength, and with all our mind may we serve thee. Send us forth, we beseech thee, saints and soldiers of a better era, in whom fine spirit and fine intelligence have been joined. We ask it in the name of him who was not only good but wise, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

## **TAKING INVENTORY OF INDEPENDENCE**



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## TAKING INVENTORY OF INDEPENDENCE

*Ye are not your own.* — I Corinthians 6:19.

THE oldest American national observance is that of the Declaration of Independence. Armistice Day, the youngest, might be termed the renunciation of independence — personal independence. For on Armistice Day, we remembered those who might have kept themselves free for their own pleasure and comfort, but who instead gave themselves for the cause of humanity, as they saw it, and for their country. We remember and revere those who relinquished their personal liberty and happiness that somehow their lives might count the more for country and mankind. No other modern day strikes so deep a tone of religion in us. We stand in awe and are moved.

The aftermath of war was acute reaction. After the long strain of discipline there was a demoralized burst of lawlessness and indulgence. The tune of the age was "How're you going to keep 'em down on the farm, after they've seen Patee?" Out of the army again, with no more rules, came the slogan, "To live one's own life." Men wanted to be bothered by no restrictions, to be on their own, unattached, unhampered by commitments of any sort whatsoever. It was an extremely natural mood.

And it carried far. This fresh gust of individualism was blowing so strong that many began to chafe under marriage ties and domestic responsibilities — and we heard the cry of free love. The old routine of dutiful faithfulness to obligations during free hours became distasteful. People wanted free evenings, free week-ends, their time for themselves. Among servants there was manifest an unreadiness to be tied down as they had been before; among the younger members of the medical profession, a disinclination to become general practitioners was apparent. Reversing a long tradition they

wanted to be able to call their time their own. The scramble for money and the speculative boom were motivated by a hungry quest for financial independence, to be free to go to places and to do things. It affected the practice of religion and church membership acutely. To be free on Sundays, and even to be independent morally, was to the taste. By professing nothing one felt less bound; and, also, one thus reserved the privilege of distilling a bit of pride in living above what one professed.

Who of us has not felt the pull of this spirit of personal independence, of living one's own life? It has been especially noted in connection with your generation who grew up during this post-war demoralization, but it has characterized quite as clearly people much older. To consider it in a Christian church before the figure of Jesus Christ is to find it already rebuked. It is fundamentally a somewhat selfish thing. Jesus asks us to relinquish our sense of independence, to recognize that our lives are not our own, and to place the will of God above our own desires. And one of the tests is a homely one: whether we are willing to be definitely associated with the Christian Church, to join it in the spirit of those who joined the army, recognizing that the welfare of the group is above our personal preference, and that in the wholesome words of the Roman centurion, "I also am a man under authority." Religion that is not strong enough to master a person is not really religion.

The Church asks no favors. In the name of Jesus it merely offers a view about oneself, a renunciation of oneself, a loyalty to something beyond oneself which is wholesome and conducive to living the highest life. The values of it are somewhat subtle and elusive — so may I bring them out with what clarity I can.

To become a faithful member of a church not a visitor, to bring obedience to it, is not now a glamorous thing to do. It has frankly lost the charm of outward adventurousness that it had with the early Christians. In the world it is regarded as quite conventional. It is easy to joke about. Who is the

butt of more jokes than the Sunday-school superintendent? — though every one knows that that officer is one of the pivotal members of organized society. The Church is the society of those who are trying to be good. It is easy to laugh at such. For, as Thornton Wilder said, "Of all forms of growth, Goodness has the longest awkward age."

Among church members there are many who are not very thrilling. But fastidiousness is not a Christian virtue; it requires a certain humbling of oneself to be found as a simple private in the Church. Before America had entered the war, two of my older schoolmasters volunteered at a training camp. A group of the boys went to watch them drill. We found them in the rear row of the awkward squad, having more difficulty than their juniors in learning the steps. Some of the boys laughed up their sleeves; but to others it was a great lesson in humility, and we revered those men the more. When I see a great layman join with a humble little Christian congregation, I admire him for the same reason.

Though Joseph and his mother Mary appeared to understand him poorly, we read that Jesus "was subject unto them." With all his superb personal graces and endowments, Jesus might have shunned those homely institutions of Jewry, but he always chose to do otherwise. Though the speaker in the synagogue could tell him nothing new, "He went into the synagogue on the sabbath as his custom was."

Willingness to be associated with inconspicuous people and to do homely things has ever characterized those who have really followed him. As an undergraduate I used to make sport of some of the church organizations, particularly the ladies' organizations. But some of us who laughed have returned to pray. The agenda from our last missionary meeting at my church contained a report of the subscriptions of various members toward giving a cow to a mission in the Northwest. It seemed that an Indian Christian worker had come East to beg it, because the children in his school were painfully undernourished. It was a homely thing to give — a mere cow — but no one could estimate the good done by Christian women

who leagued together for the help of others. One must be humble to make himself meet for the Master's use.

Again, definite Christian allegiance to a church is a help toward unselfishness, in giving us to care for something beyond ourselves. It is good for us to give back our individualities of taste and preference, and to assume the burden of a group. A young country gentleman from the far South told me the other night that his rector had asked him to lead the Sunday school in a little country church, and asked me whether he should agree to do it. He loved golf, and felt that this would cut in upon his time for that. He was an awfully nice person, though I felt that the one thing he needed was more hardness in his leisurely life: but not trusting myself to give advice, I told him of a friend, a doctor and a great tennis player, who, twenty-five years ago, agreed to go into New York from the suburbs to teach a Sunday-school class. The boys, when they grew up, refused to disband the class, so for many years it has been a men's class. As that doctor looks back to review his life, what can give him more satisfaction than this engagement? It has made him what he is, and though a simple thing, has obviously added to a prosaic life something of the quality of glory.

Indeed, as regards one's unconscious influence, what extension does active participation in the Church allow! A student on the eve of his graduation told me a bit about his spiritual struggle while in college. He had had a purely secular bringing up, but through friendship with one of the best of our clergy, he had become an ardent and eager member of the Church, and Confirmation had been a great event in his life. Then in college the attitude of the majority and the intellectual unsettlement seemed to wither away the last vestiges of his faith. Deeply alone, he decided to come to his final service. It was an early Holy Communion service, where there were very few others in the church. Across the aisle came the Dean of the Columbia Graduate School, Dr. Frederick Woodbridge, according to his custom. The student watched the Dean through his devotions, struck by their simplicity and earnestness, and he reasoned thus with himself: — "If an intellectual

giant can be a sincere believer, it must be that I fail for lack of knowledge." This inspired him to go on, and he is now representing Christianity in the Doshisha University in Japan, planning to spend a lifetime in Christian service. The Dean, however, is still unaware that his faithfulness accomplished anything that morning.

One never knows what the practice of the Christian religion in church may mean to others, for again and again it happens that the mere presence of one is a reassurance to some one else. It surely puts one in the way of finding avenues of service and influence that one would not otherwise have noticed. The person out of touch, however nice, is at a point of disadvantage for giving active help. For about our churches there flock those in need, in all the multifarious ways in which humans can be in want. They wait, even as did the impotent about the pool of Siloam, for the angel to trouble the waters and to help them in their infirmities. Jesus with his eye of sympathy, coming that way saw how he might help one such. The opportunity opens wide in any church for one to help another.

So active participation in church work is a humble thing, an unselfish one, and as well the opening of larger opportunity. It is a practical decision which faces all of us. Sometimes I marvel at those in foreign lands who, when they hear the Gospel, join the church, suffering the opprobriousness that that often means. How hard a thing to say good-by to the conversation and the customs of one's group and to be known as a member of the strange society! And as I marvel, I admire the simple genuineness of the response of their honest hearts to the call of Christ.

At the Virginia Seminary there was a young Japanese, a member of the Nippon Sei Kokwai, as they call it, the Holy Catholic Church in Japan. When sixteen years old he had heard about Jesus Christ, and without temporizing he had done exactly what the Master asked — had changed his manner of life and his plans for life, even to the point of coming to far-off Virginia to be trained to serve in the church. Then he returned to his homeland to invest his life there in the Cause.

Each year the class receives a letter from him, in his quaint English, and one of them that I remember read like this: "Contrary to what most of you can do, I cannot give you good reports about my work. Number of baptizing and presenting the bishop for confirmation is very few. It passes four and half years already since I came to this parish, but I am repeating the same small work in the same difficult condition. I think the text 'A thousand year is with the Lord as one day' is very true. In our evangelical work in Japan both native workers and American supporters must be patient. The true and strong Church in Japan will be still far off. I and others present workers in Japan must die as bottom foundation stones to build up an eternal and big castle of Nippon Sei Kokwai." In the way of life Paul Nagada met Jesus. He joined his church. He responded by doing the humble thing, the unselfish thing. He little knows how far his influence may carry, what the destiny of the church he serves.

The same sun that shines on Paul Nagada, shines on us. His life and ours are equally watched by the God of things as they are. Can the Lord see us responding as sincerely as did this little brother of ours in far Japan?

## **A GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT WITH LIFE**



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## A GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT WITH LIFE

THE words of our text are not to be found in any body of writings that have ever been held sacred in any religion. They are not to be found in the New Testament but are worthy of a place in it. They are words in which George Bernard Shaw gives, in the preface to one of his plays, his definition of a gentleman: "A gentleman is one who puts back into life a little more than he takes out."

That definition is worth looking at not only for the contrast which it makes to many of the meanings which have been put into the word *gentleman* but principally for two other reasons: first, for the clue which it gives to the road leading into the keenest zest and interest in life; and second, for the way in which it cuts dramatically across many widely accepted codes of living in our day.

That word *gentleman* has as varied a history as any word in the language. On its way down from the Middle Ages it has taken strange meanings, both great and trivial, noble and ludicrous. Yet, with all changes in manners and morals, no man will resign his claim to that title. There used to be a much used combination of words employed as a tribute: "A gentleman and a scholar." People are not so insistent today on being known as scholars. Even in college it is reported that students can fail to be noted as scholars without having a complete nervous breakdown. Yet no man ever willingly lets go the title of gentleman. Dean Inge has recently said, "A bishop would be much more angry if he were told that he was no gentleman than if he were told he was no Christian." To be a gentleman has become a sort of lay religion.

Look at some points in the strange history of this word. James I of England gave voice to a very common idea of a gentleman when he said once with a good deal of heat, "Pres-

byterianism is no religion for a gentleman." In this case, at least, James knew what he was talking about. James and his mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, had had a good deal of wild and tumultuous experience with Presbyterianism. It was with very unreluctant feet that he took the road leading away from Edinburgh to London. And with apologies to any Presbyterians who may be present, James was right! It *was* no religion for a gentleman as James understood that term, for Presbyterianism, like all forms of Calvinism, in spite of its doctrine of foreordination, was open union and James belonged to a closed one — The Amalgamated Order of Kings and Nobles. Calvinism carried at its heart the conviction, that not only might a cat look at a king, but that a man might look at a king by virtue of his common manhood; and more, that he could plant his foot on the neck of a king if that seemed to be the foreordained place to plant it at the moment!

Drop down a couple of centuries and ponder for a moment that strange title given to George IV of England: "The first gentleman of Europe." Heaven preserve us! It seems incredible that there could be a hamlet small enough to permit George IV to be its "first gentleman." Seen from our point of vantage of a hundred years later, he looks like a preposterous piece of overstuffed furniture. Early in the nineteenth century, after his visit to the United States, Tom Moore wrote that the trouble with the people of this country was that "they could not spend money like gentlemen," whatever that meant. During the presidential campaign of 1860, one of the chief arguments urged against the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency was that he was "no gentleman."

These glimpses are more than enough to show that historically this word has had meanings the very opposite to that of Bernard Shaw's definition. The world's idea of a gentleman has been that of one who put in little and drew out much. The nearer one came to being a complete parasite, the more he deserved the name of gentleman.

For a word with such a checkered history it would be hard to find a definition which would claim unanimous assent. Yet

this one of Shaw's has some permanent elements which are valid for any day of changing styles and manners. It presents to us also some provocative questions.

# I

Notice, for one thing, that the definition is not merely one-sided and sentimental. It leaves a large place for a worthy acquisition, which implies something that is often forgotten, that a man's first duty in life is to *take something*. Both in the pulpit and elsewhere, we have been deluged with a great deal of sentimental talk about "service," which has thrown a fog about that primary fact. We have used the word *acquisition* with an ignoble connotation and have often forgotten that there is a noble spirit of acquisition as well as an ignoble one. If any one is to make a real and lasting contribution to life, it will be only through the resolute acquirement of some skill and capacity. There are quite enough people, fluttering around with merely good intentions in general, who have never gone through the discipline required to develop a tempered skill that would count for something. Bernard Shaw himself in his Fabian Socialist days once said of one of the new recruits to the cause: "Ah, good old Jones; his heart is with us. I wish we had his head!" A heart of good will without a head may be as futile as any other form of sentimentalism. A person without a clear head in working condition will be just like a turnstile, "getting in everybody's way but stopping nothing." We often hear the advice given to young people to learn to stand on their feet. A much more difficult art is that of standing on their heads. During days of preparation it should be remembered that one's primary religious duty is to take from life as much as he can get; to make of his mind not a waste basket but a kit of sharp tools. This duty was never more urgent than today, when civilization has come to depend for its very existence on clear-headed thinking-through of the complicated tangles of our modern life. There is a fine phrase which has an attractive ring about it, "the contagion of learn-

ing." I suppose there is something in it, but we ought to remember that learning is not as contagious as measles. You will never catch it in college by standing around the halls. All you will catch in the halls is a cold. Unless you take something with a desperate vigor, you will be holding the lantern while some one else does the work, and saying, "What do you know about that!"

## II

Yet, if this definition of a gentleman begins with acquisition, it does not end there. The significance of any life depends upon a favorable balance of trade. In economics it has been customary to say, though the idea is vigorously challenged today, that a country has a favorable balance of trade when its exports exceed its imports. A man maintains a favorable balance of trade in the moral world when his exports exceed his imports; that is, when he puts back more than he takes out.

This truth is rooted in nature. It is true of the farmer. We have a frequently used phrase, "a gentleman farmer." In common usage that means nothing more than that a man does not make a living out of the land. Henry Ward Beecher described himself as a "gentleman farmer" when he said, "I have acquired a farm and am fast rising from affluence to bankruptcy." If you are going to be that kind of farmer you can farm in any way you wish; but if you are to be a real farmer you must be a gentleman. You must put in as well as take out. Nature abhors a vacuum. She also abhors a land-skinner. Here in America we have had a long tragic story of waste, men who have exhausted the soil, plundered the forests and moved on. They were not farmers because they were not gentlemen. If you are to live with the land you must swear out a gentleman's agreement with the land.

It is just as true of life as a whole that to win our way through to its largest values we must make a gentleman's agreement with life, an agreement to put back more than we take out. A man's real income, as opposed to that which can be

measured in dollars or things, his real income, — that is, what really comes in to him for the enrichment of life, — is measured by a favorable balance of trade. It is measured by the excess of what he puts back into life over what he withdraws for himself. Any other way which purports to lead into a lasting exhilaration and zest of life is a blind alley. You can dip down into the stream of life and bring up evidence of that truth anywhere, in any century.

Here is a Frenchman, for instance, who found life an intolerable bore, Henri Beyle, better known by his pen name of Stendhal. He was a man so self-centered that his latest biographer gives as a subtitle to his life's story, *The Story of an Egoist*. Toward the middle of the last century we find him crying out in his boredom: "What a dreary century we live in! How it smells and reeks of boredom." That is what life added up to for the supreme egoist.

Look at some other men as they lived in that same century. There was another Frenchman who lived just a few miles away and a few years later. We find him going through the exhausting labor of hundreds of repeated experiments to test the truth of a scientific hypothesis. In the midst of a long-drawn-out endeavor to save the life of a boy bitten by a mad dog, we find him saying that he has been without sleep but does not need it, for there is a chance of success. That was how that same dreary century looked to Louis Pasteur. A few years later we find a man writing from the interior of Africa, a man for whom every day had its suffering and uncertainty of life, confessing that he would not be anywhere else for worlds. It was no dreary century for him. Death and pain looked him in the face and there was no "reek of boredom." In that same "dreary" century out in the Mississippi Valley was a man who might have been excused for crying out at the difficulties of life, a man whose life was filled with burdens and cares but who never found it tiresome, and who in its darkest moments confessed gratitude that he was able to give of himself. That was what that "dreary century" meant to Abraham Lincoln. These three men we have mentioned were

as far apart as men could be in beliefs in ultimate things and in temperament. But they were alike in one thing: they had made a gentleman's agreement with life. They had much to give and they spent it like gentlemen. Because they put in more than they took out, life was ever a rich and full thing.

### III

Just for a minute notice again how sharply this ideal of life is set over against the current moods and codes which hold ascendancy over multitudes. As against this picture of putting in more than one takes out, set the common idea of our day which exalts the supreme cleverness of putting in little and taking out much. In the (very much) Shorter Catechism of the multitudes, the chief end of man is to get something for nothing. This is not a peculiarly American motive by any means but has been vastly complicated by American history. It is in part a legacy from pioneer days and from the enormous opportunities which the resources of our country and the development of modern industry and commerce have given for manipulation and greed. We have inherited some of the spirit of exploitation and rampant individualism of the frontier. Professor Vernon L. Parrington describes the flowering of this mood in days of the Grant administration as the "grand barbecue" where multitudes crowded to the table of our national resources to grab as big a hunk of the common heritage as they could. That mood finds prevalence in the gambling mania and spirit which so mark our own day.

Against that spirit about us and in us, two things are demanded:

First, we must personally brace ourselves against the pull of the current, against the infection of the fever of getting something for nothing. We must see to it that this does not insidiously and with plausible disguises become the main spirit of our lives. This quotation taken from the daily stock advice, *Stock Tips*, published in the New York *Daily News*, a tabloid newspaper with the largest circulation of any paper

in the United States, gives a picture of millions of reaching hands and lusting minds:

"Dupont is a corker; . . . there's at least 40 points in it if bought at the market. Stick with the Standards of N. Y. and N. J. . . . For a high-flyer, Eastman Kodak can't be surpassed. . . . Natural Dairy Products are about ready to go. . . .

"Buy Montgomery Ward and reap a substantial profit by Aug. 26. . . . The Market Goose hangs high as Broker's Loans dip. . . . U. S. Freight is to have a swirl upward. . . . The rails never looked better. . . . Don't go to bed tonight without having some American and Foreign Power in your strongbox."

The person whose chief purpose in life is to get something for less may be a gentleman according to what the well-dressed gentleman will wear, according to Dunn or Bradstreet, according to the social register; but he fails on this all-important test of an ethical balance of trade.

Second, this gentleman's code is the only basis for an ethical society. In other words, it is just as true for a society as for an individual, that the way in which the largest good is to be found is in an emphasis on human welfare rather than on individual acquisition.

Take this year we are living in, with its tragedy of unemployment. That results from a complex of causes which I am not competent to analyze. More than that, I think we may well beware of any man who has a trick formula, a magic pill for so deep-seated a complication of diseases, whether he be economist or engineer, politician or preacher, capitalist or communist. To find a remedy for the unemployment which is a part of the very economic system will take the cooperation of the best brains of the world for a generation.

On the other hand, one of the most hopeful signs of the times is that multitudes of men are facing with open minds the question whether we shall ever reach any satisfactory solution, unless we question the motives as well as the methods and the mechanism of our economic order. Even a casual view will



make evident how largely the money-making, the big prizes, are centered on exploitation rather than on production for actual need; taking the work and enterprises of others and manipulating them to wring as large a profit as possible, without any corresponding return. This religious ideal of the abundant life is a challenge not only to the conscience but to the intelligence when it urges some form of social and mutual aid in place of the unrestricted drive of competitive profit-seeking; when it urges the widest possible distribution rather than concentration of income and power; and when it urges in the place of the exclusive play of the profit motive, other motives which have demonstrated their power in many fields, including the purely business field, such as public approval and the pride of craftsmanship.

There is need of knowledge; but beyond that there is desperate need of men of good will and sensitive sympathies, who are not content to live behind the barricades of privilege.

#### IV

The crucial question about any ideal is that of motive power. Why attempt it? Why try to live like a gentleman in this sense? What are the chances of its ever being worth while? A faith in the God of Jesus does this for a man: it brings him the assurance that in trying to put into life more than he takes out, he is not off on a lonely expedition, following a fantastic and quixotic way of life, but is in league with the ultimate power in the universe. That motive becomes incarnate and inexhaustible in Jesus. One of the finest characterizations ever made of Jesus is that of the old English dramatist, Thomas Dekker. He called Jesus, "the first true gentleman that ever lived." Jesus took much out of life. No one ever lived who got more from the pageant of life, from nature and humanity. Yet, as we watch him go down the country roads and through the city streets, as we observe him in every relationship, even in casual contacts, we see him putting into life measurelessly more than he took out. He took out much. He put in more.

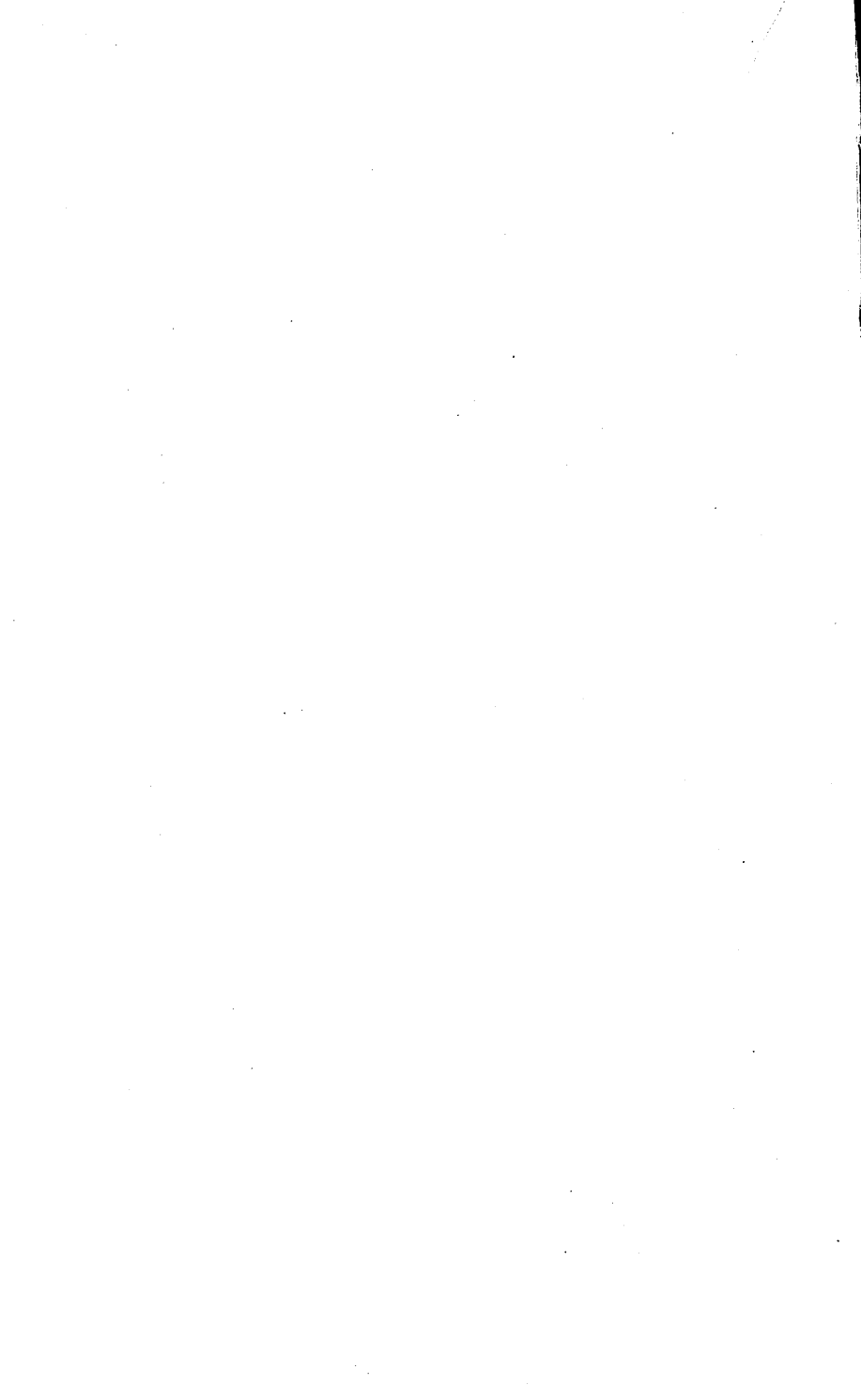
And we discern that his life was not run on its own power alone; that underneath it was the inexhaustible faith that the order of love is the will of God and that where love is, God is.

Of course this is a venture. We cannot start out with the answer as we do in geometry and sew it up tight with the neat Q. E. D. It is frankly a risk. We go out into life on that faith of Jesus and we do not know the outcome.

“It may be that the gulfs will wash us down,  
It may be we shall touch the happy isles.”

But its being a venture only puts it in the class with all of life's richest values. Love, friendship—they are not sure things. You can not insure a friendship. Lloyds in London will insure almost anything under the sun—including the weather!—but even Lloyds will not insure the success of a marriage. They will insure a ship on a twenty-five-thousand-mile trip around the world. They will not insure a marriage through a twelve-month journey. The richest values of life are never mathematical, they are moral ventures. Yet for that reason we need not wait to make the venture until we have guaranteed by logical proof that a gentleman's agreement with life has behind it the moral forces of the universe. Irving Babbitt has said with pertinence: “The person who declines to turn the Higher Will to account until he is sure he has grasped its ultimate nature, is as foolish as the man who refuses to make use of electrical energy, until he is sure that he has an unassailable definition of electricity.”

None of us will ever have an unassailable definition of God. At the end of life we shall all be still farther from any unassailable proof. But to all of us there is available the buoyant and energizing power of the faith of Him who “came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”



## **CONFORMITY AND LIFE**

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## CONFORMITY AND LIFE

*Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may know what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*—Romans 12:2.

OF late we have heard a great deal about the iconoclasm of the new generation. Many sermons have been preached in behalf of youth based on that splendid text in Judges where the Lord says to Gideon, "Throw down the altar which thy father hath built." There has also been an intellectual enlargement of the mind, and this, too, has demanded the restatement of religion. At the same time I think that I can show that our losses in life today come by reason of the fact that the older age is too iconoclastic and the younger generation is too conservative — in the wrong places, I mean.

Nothing is more to be deplored than the significant change which has swept over the people of middle age. It is a change which is entirely aside from the fact that, when the world enlarges its knowledge, all ages of life are affected. We can leave to one side the inescapable changes in the fashions of clothes which have made so many of the middle-aged look sadly younger than their years. It has expressed a fear on the part of older people of being out of the picture, of being left behind, a fear that the party is almost over and that possibly they have placed values in attitudes and relationships which appear to have been over-rated. Still speaking in the terms of the *mores* in which they were trained, they go about with the suspicion that these rules of life are no longer adequate. As a result they appear cheated, robbed of poise, of the saving complacency which is one of the recompenses of life's later years. They are, morally speaking, going about dressed in the teen-age garb; they are, morally speaking, "lift-

ing" their faces and dyeing their hair; and they fool nobody, not even themselves.

It is this misplaced iconoclasm which is pictured in the fiction of the last ten years. The pages are filled with the misadventures of a generation which failed to find itself; and their failure results in their being iconoclastic in the wrong place. For they demand the new freedom of youth today at a time when they should be assuming responsibilities. Gearing their private lives to the hectic speed of night club and roadhouse, they have clung to a social order which was sadly out of joint. The essence of happiness is to be conservative with regard to a personal morality and to be liberal with regard to a social morality, and we older people have done just the opposite thing. And how the newer generation feels about it can be seen by the fact that few young girls want their mothers to smoke or to bob their hair; they want the background of a generation which is sure of itself and which has achieved the healthful conformity to its true best self.

In the realm of youth the spiritual losses of today are due to a misplaced conformity and conservatism. For various reasons the present age of youth has had too forcible reminders that the immediate past is not entirely to be trusted. But youth never needs any particular urge to discard the valuable experience of maturity. Nearly every boy comes to the period when his folks cannot tell him anything. And he loses as well as gains by this attitude. The reverse of this picture is a sweeping conformity with regard to contemporary attitudes. Youth makes the same mistake that is made by older people. They, too, were too uncritical of the *mores* in which they were trained. The mistake then is this: In youth we sweep away the past and enter whole-heartedly into ourselves and into our generation's life. Later we question ourselves and accept with too great timidity the new values heralded by a younger world. Youth is going through this same mistake today.

In your own set — conform; with regard to the past, smash everything. This is our cry and it is wrong at both points. To

be an iconoclast with regard to things outside your group is only another, an accentuated conformity. The real task is to refuse to conform *in* your group and *in* your age; to keep your mind open with regard to matters too generally and too uncritically accepted by your contemporaries. This is the problem of our lives today.

There are times when I am heartened by a prevalent tolerance. Youth is willing to look at both sides, to give credit for sincerity to the one who differs, to mind its own business. There are other times when I regret the needless wastage of unchallenged evils, the costliness of this indifferent acceptance of ways of living.

One of the evil results of this conformity today is the weighting of life with expensive and nonremunerative habits. If any one attempts to assume an attitude of hardness with regard to himself, he is careful not to have anybody else know it. And yet, unless our present period of self-indulgence is curbed, this generation will not have time to do any really significant thing about the work of the world. I am not going to specify as to which habits I am talking about. But my point is that youths are too much conformists, too much of a type, too much running in a herd, too afraid to stand out apart, too unwilling to criticize their own set, too prone to reflect in their individual attitudes the opinion of the many. And in college is this particularly to be lamented.

In an institution which is designed to cultivate and encourage self-reliance the tide sets too much toward intellectual and social conformity. It may be true that college life is but a cross section of life in the world, but one reason why the world sets us apart in college is that we be not thus describable. We ought *not* to be typical of the world. We ought to be creating new and better norms of living. That is what the world expects. No one can tell this present generation the truth about themselves so well as youth itself. I should like to see more of this rebellion, not of youth against old age — we'll have that anyway — but of youth against its own generation. I should like to see more hardness, more self-rigor, more



personal puritanism; for out of these self-critical sufferings, a splendid age will dawn.

And now let me state the case of conformity again. I have said that we conform and we rebel at the wrong points. An older generation, after having accepted a moral program too uncritically, has now arrived at a state of uncertainty. Youth is now in the conforming period, conforming to its own uncriticized norms. And this brings me to what I have been wanting to say about religion and the functions played here by conforming and iconoclastic attitudes. While religion is thought of by us as an orthodoxy, religion, as a matter of fact, is a rebellion. It is a breaking-off with the world, a challenge of accepted norms. It is a leaven, said Jesus. Is there not a warfare to man upon the earth? There is, whenever a great religious idea comes to mankind. In *The Green Pastures*, the character of God stands upon the ark when the flood has at last subsided, and says gravely, "This mankind is some proposition." Religion is a conformity, in that religion lays down laws of life—love, unselfishness, whole-heartedness, inner reality, and we neglect these laws at our peril. We surround these realities with unrealities and often, when we try to make things real again, we forget where unreality leaves off and so, thoughtlessly, discard the whole business. But when we conform to these laws we are in a war with the actual world. Trying to live a life like that which Jesus lived is a dangerous affair; it is often a desperate business. The problem of religion is thus a matter of knowing when to be conformists and when to be in rebellion. And Paul states the matter very simply. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may know what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." If we keep this in mind, and try to conform to the inescapable, relentless laws of love, as Jesus pictured love, we shall put conformity and iconoclasm in their right places.

**"NOTHING TOO HIGH"**

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## “NOTHING TOO HIGH”

*Let us now praise famous men.* — Ecclesiasticus 44:1.

“LET us now praise famous men.” This stirring sentence strikes the first note of a great section which lies buried away in the Bible like a nugget of gold. It is followed by other stirring sentences which, written by an unknown author, call the roll and recount the deeds of Israel’s foremost heroes. In this ancient song are these lines about Elisha, one of her first prophets and boldest leaders — “He was not moved by fear, no one brought him into subjection, nothing was too high for him.” Whole volumes could not tell more than those last six words. “Nothing was too high for him!” Surely he must have been a man of indomitable spirit, — eagle-winged, of unflagging courage: “nothing was too high for him!”

We are all stirred by the records of men who have essayed high things. If you would spend a thrilling evening, if you would have your faith in the capacities and splendors of the human spirit revived, take up Captain John Noel’s book *The Story of Everest*. Read his moving tale of dreaming, of daring, of painstaking courage and of almost unbelievable endurance. India is bounded on the north by a rampart of colossal mountains; “one hundred peaks each twenty-four thousand feet in height, twenty giants of twenty-six thousand feet, six supergiants of twenty-seven thousand feet” — and, looking down upon them all, Everest, more than twenty-nine thousand feet high. Read his story of two of the great expeditions whereby men sought to scale and to stand upon the roof of the world or, as he puts it, “to get God’s view of things.”

Or, if you would follow not the feet but the minds of men moving in a loftier realm still, and if you like your facts set to music, take Alfred Noyes’s *Watchers of the Sky*. Listen to him as he movingly sings the story of Copernicus, Kepler,

Galileo, Newton, and others; those silent discoverers, lonely pioneers, martyrs of the truth who from "age to age and step by step, drove back the black night of ignorance and caught glimpses of God's law, sovereign and imperial, enthroned among and beyond the stars." Nothing was too high for them.

I have just been reading a book dealing with chemistry applied to modern industry. It is an amazing revelation of the marvel of man's mind and of our world. Here, too, is a story of men held back by no height. Read, sometime, the story of how man has gone out into the atmosphere that envelops us and has laid it under bondage to produce his nitrogenous fertilizers, or read the thrilling story of his discovery of helium in the heart of the sun. Nothing has been too exalted, too remote, too ideal for man's spirit. The story of mankind could be written in terms of the heights he has glimpsed and climbed. We belong, you and I, to an order of being that has both dreamed boldly and achieved greatly.

This is not true, I think, in any significant measure, of any other order of sentient life. The ox, so far as we can discover, has never made any serious attempt to lift himself out of his oxdom. He is content to munch grass and is patient under burdens, even as he was in the days of the Pharaohs. The sparrow chirps in our streets and splashes in pools of rain water exactly as she did in Jesus' day: she has not added a single note to her chirp. But it is not so with man. It was evident as far back as that dim age hinted at in the first chapter of Genesis, that here was a different order of creature. "And God said, 'Let us make man and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and the cattle of the field' . . . and he created man — and he breathed into him the breath of life." And man, from that day to this, has climbed — amazingly.

We would, for instance, communicate with one another. We are not limited to chatterings, and grimace and gesture. Languages, reasoned, complicated, euphonious, have been evolved, and we speed our thoughts and send words around

the world on wings swift as light. We would live in safety and in comfort. We are not limited to caves in the hillsides and huts of mud and bark. Our homes are vastly superior to these. We would stir or soothe the soul with music. The symphony orchestra is the lineal descendant of the hollow log, thumped with a club. This great organ's ancestry runs straight back to a prehistoric boy sitting beside some marsh, blowing on a reedy whistle.

Wherever you touch the history of this creature, formed of the dust of the earth but breathed upon with the spirit of God, you find him standing erect, head up, eyes lifted. His dreams are always running out beyond his deeds.

We have, however, read only the introductory chapters when we have read of his dreams and deeds in the realm of material things. More impressive, more divine, more indicative of his true nature are those pages that tell the story of his long, slow climb toward the unseen eternities. These verities that have loomed for ages upon the horizon of man's mind and have ever flung their imperial shadows across his life have never been more perfectly pointed out to us than by Plato in his ancient trinity of truth and beauty and goodness. These are peaks loftier than even Everest, and upon their ascent, too, the heart of man has been mysteriously but undeniably set.

“The world beautified and enlightened” was the dream of ancient Greece. “The world ordered under law” was the dream of ancient Rome. The world aware of and obedient to God was the hope of Judaism. “The world a brotherhood acknowledging a divine father” was the dream of Jesus. And these, my friends, are high dreams, and men still dream them.

Set-back after set-back, defeat after defeat, delay after delay, blind guide after blind guide — but man has not desired less, nor abandoned his dream. On the contrary, he has strained his eyes to catch, through veils of cloud and storm, these lofty summits; and never has he failed to find them imperial and challenging. We are passing today through a period of storm. The clouds of pessimism hang low and are black. Materialism, a miasmatic fog, shrouds us. The “seats of the

scornful " are all occupied. There are scores of observers telling us that morality is dying; that conscience is a ridiculous delusion; that religion, the daughter of superstition, is in her last and fatal sickness; that the churches are the weary and worn defenders of a lost cause. The critics point out that Russia officially sanctions irreligion; that the real religion of America is power, and that the real god of America is the god of financial success. This god, they tell us, is saying to our youth "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and they are listening. There is ground for many of these assertions, but there is nothing new in them. They are like the clouds that are always drifting across a normal sky. They are part of the landscape. They are to be expected. They have their place. They perform their service; and one of the services of clouds is to make the sun more welcome. Clouds may darken a day or spoil a season, but no wise man believes that they are more powerful, more life-giving than the sun, which ultimately and always conquers. They can cloak it and do hide it; but they have never yet shaken the sun nor kept it from its appointed path and place. So with these high verities; they are unshaken and abide.

The ideal of truth still sways the imagination and commands the allegiance of multitudes of men. In no other way can we explain the great army—in this country alone, of nearly twenty millions—that marches each fall up to the doorways of our schools and colleges and demands admittance. The aims of modern education may be hazy, the motives of our students may be mixed, the methods may be faulty; but men know that "truth," in the words of John Milton, "is mighty next to Almighty God," and they want to be found on her side. Truth is an exceedingly high thing. Men know with the Psalmist of old that they can never attain to the summit of it; but, with every passing year, the lure and the love of it grow, and the marching generations find themselves always a little farther up its slopes.

The same thing is true of beauty. By beauty we do not mean the creation or preservation of pictures or trees, or

buildings that seem to us satisfying and inspiring. We mean the attainment of harmony, of balance throughout the length and breadth of life. Beauty is an inward fitness and rightness that manifests itself outwardly and powerfully. Surely, we today dream of and desire and seek to serve beauty in her "various forms."

Strangers often say to me, of my own church, "This is a very beautiful church," and I find that I have but one reply — "You ought to know the people." That church without the beautiful spirit of those who love it and worship in it from week to week would be a cold offense and a mistake. Those men and women are the guardians of a beauty more subtle and more real than any beauty of glass or stone. The world beyond her walls, too,—my world and yours—is full of men and women who, in their homes, in their children, in their attitudes toward their neighbor, and, most of all, in the building of their own lives, are seeking to serve this ideal of beauty.

But life is more than an endeavor to climb the lower slopes of truth; it is even more than a quest for inner harmony and outer grace. There is a never-sated hunger and urge within us to find and to lose ourselves in the Highest Good. The seed loses and finds itself in the flower. The wave loses and finds its true glory in the might of the sea. The mother spends her life and finds her highest joy and glory in her children. So the soul of man yearns to lose and to find itself in oneness with Essential Goodness. "Our souls, O God, are restless till they rest in thee."

Truth? Yes. Beauty? Yes. Also, The Highest Good. These are written down into the very constitution of our souls; and blind, scar, blot, scratch, break the soul as much as we will, we can never efface the traces and marks of these ideals, slowly molded into us and deeply graven upon us by the eternal Moulder and Shaper of men.

But to keep sight of and to climb toward these high things costs. Of course; high things have always cost. "Progress" may be "the law of life," as Browning says it is, but this is certain: progress is not automatic and inevitable, save as it is



apparently inevitably decreed that man should forever strive, at infinite pains, to lift himself from height to height and ever higher.

And it is right here that the true meaning of the cross emerges. The cross is more than a reminder of the cruel death of the bravest and most eager spirit this planet has ever known. It is a reminder to every brave and eager spirit that the heights will yield only to those who set their faces steadfastly and are willing to endure greatly. That is not saying that life is a tragedy and heartbreak. It is only saying that it is an adventure wherein valor is requisite, and that this valor is man's most precious and shining possession. By virtue of it the heights are incessantly assailed, and because of it they have, by little and by little, yielded.

Let me read now a few sentences drawn from the pages in which Captain Noel tells of the final attack upon Everest's storm-swept summit and of the death of the gallant Mallory and Irvine.

"Up and up into the blue they had gone, higher and higher — higher than men have ever reached before. Odell got a single fleeting glimpse of them within six hundred feet of the summit and still going up. Then he saw nothing more. What happened? No one knows. They never came back. . . . Hour after hour we watched the mountain with our telescopes for what we might see through the mists. The men were a day and a night overdue. . . . Two whole days and nights had now gone by with hope fading at every hour. . . . Suddenly our watchers called out that they saw figures on the crest of the ice cliff. We riveted our eyes to the cliff top. We saw through the telescope a line of men returning and entering the camp. It was Odell with his support party. Presently we saw figures come out to the edge of the shelf. They were coming to make a signal to us. . . . What would the signal be? Life or —? I saw them place six blankets in the form of a cross. Then they went away. This was the signal of Death. . . . We all looked. We all tried to make it different. But it was plainly a cross on the white snow."

We try “to make it different.” It can’t be done! Everest or the high and secret dreams that rule our lives, the way that climbs toward these summits climbs steeply. Nothing has been too high. Men have died climbing. Men have come off “more than conquerors.” But, dying or achieving, they have given proof of the shining splendor of man’s spirit. The point and glory of it all for us lies here: We come, you and I, of this climbing, conquering breed. Accept, then, the challenge of the looming highest. Look and toil toward it valorously. Prove that within your soul there lies your fair share of this shining thing that is your rightful heritage. So live that it may be said of you, *Nothing was too high for him!*



## **THE ART OF SELF-MANAGEMENT**

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## THE ART OF SELF-MANAGEMENT

WE live in an age of scientific management. It is not uncommon today to hear business men tell how the application of better methods to commercial enterprises sometimes results in a three hundred per cent increase of output and a four hundred per cent increase of profit.

But, in the end, scientific management depends on self-management. A Hebrew sage said long ago in the book of Proverbs: "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city"; and Mr. A. Clutton Brock, a distinguished English essayist, has said: "We need to take morality more seriously than politics or machinery or sanitation or any other science. For all of these, however necessary, are subsidiary to the management of the self; and all would be a thousand times better managed by a race of beings who knew how to manage themselves." What, then, are the principles which underlie the art of managing one's self?

First of all, self-knowledge. If you are going to control your mental machinery, you need to know something about it. In these days we are learning a great many valuable things about why we behave like human beings and how this mental machinery of ours works. We recognize, for example, that we carry with us many blind and primitive urges and impulses by which we are akin to the tiger and the ape. Hunger, rage, sex, jealousy, vanity, revenge — these things are primitive and universal. Fear is something to be reckoned with as a disturbing element — a wise man once said, "The only man to be afraid of is the man who is himself afraid." And when fear becomes combined with crowd psychology you have the homicidal tendency of the mob. Rationalization, which means our tendency to think up false reasons for doing what we want to do anyway, or justifying ourselves to our own consciences —

"kidding ourselves," the very expressive slang phrase has it — is another universal weakness. It helps tremendously in meeting any situation to be able to look beneath the plausible and surface reasons and ask what are the real motives underneath. Is this argument, so plausibly put forward, the whole story, or is it only a rationalization, partly unconscious it may be, of deeper, more elemental, more emotional urges beneath?

It is a great thing to have come to a clear-headed realization of this ever-present possibility in trying to understand other people and other groups; but it is a still greater thing to come to that power of objective self-criticism, where one remembers to ask this question about himself or his own group. The possibility of undermining war psychology depends largely on developing such a cool-headed power of analysis. It is very illuminating, for example, to read a bound volume of *Punch* for the year before the Crimean War, and see England rationalizing itself into a war mood. To know these things is to guard against them. If one's foes are in part members of one's own household, it is well to be forewarned. We can manage these cave-man tendencies if we are on guard against them.

But, of course, there is another side. The unexplored depths of the mind contain not only hold-overs from prehuman or barbarous ancestors; they contain also a marvelous treasure-house of memory, and an emotional impulse toward all that is noble and beautiful — what Benjamin Kidd calls "the emotion of the ideal." We need to know our better as well as our lesser selves.

A psychiatrist once said to me, "You know at last we have to forgive ourselves!" To which a discerning friend replied: "That's too easy! The trouble with most men is they are too ready to forgive themselves!" But I think my medical friend saw deeper. At last we do have to forgive ourselves. Before we can really ask forgiveness of God in any deep or significant way, we must have cleared the thing in our own consciences. At last we have to stand before the judgment seat of this austere emotion of the ideal within us which cannot be forever evaded or rationalized away. "More sternly, then,

the inward judge obey," said Matthew Arnold, laying hold on the basic moral fact in the universe.

Edwin Markham once said to the students of my own university:

"In spite of the stare of the wise  
And the world's derision,  
Dare follow the star-blazed road  
And be true to the vision,  
For at last 'tis only the vision is real —  
Yea, nothing can hold against hell  
But the winged ideal!"

From self-knowledge we must pass on to self-acceptance. Not in any complacent self-sufficient way, of course. Not like the little old lady in Boston who refused to travel, saying, "Why should I travel? I'm here already!" What I mean is acceptance in the sense of acquiescence with the conditions of our lives rather than rebellion against them. As if we said: Being what I am, with all the handicaps and limitations that I have, I'll not waste time envying other men — this man's art and that man's scope — but I'll say, After all this is my stunt; I'll roll up my sleeves and sail in!

I emphasize this because the alternative to acquiescence is escape. And to attempt to escape from life is always dangerous — as Jonah found when he tried to run away to Tarshish! The most obvious escape is by alcohol, which temporarily numbs the brain and throws the judgment out of gear. But there are other escape mechanisms — notably into the realm of fantasy, day-dreaming and illusion.

Novel-reading used to be such an escape; today it is the movies. But some one will say: "Is all escape bad? Then what about worship? Isn't that an escape from reality into an ideal world?" The point is well raised. Escape is often good and necessary. I believe that vacations and humor and care-free relaxation, as well as worship, are all in the list of desirable escape mechanisms. But the test is this: What does the escape experience do for you? Does it send you back to face the



realities of life refreshed, strengthened, with thoughts clarified and mind alert, or does it send you back reluctant and defeated?

If you are determined, however, not to run away from life but to face it, the next step is this: Organize yourself! Some one has said, "Woe unto that nation which has a tramp for a king!" A tramp has been defined as a man who gained freedom but lost direction. Don't have a tramp for a king. Don't be a tramp! Organize yourself. Know where you are going. And go there!

We hear a great deal of foolish talk about the necessity for self-expression and the danger of repressed desires. But, if you are going to live a disciplined and examined life you can't follow every vagrant impulse — you must evaluate and choose. The important thing is to choose the best. A Spanish proverb says: "I cannot prevent the birds from alighting on my head, but I can keep them from building nests in my hair!"

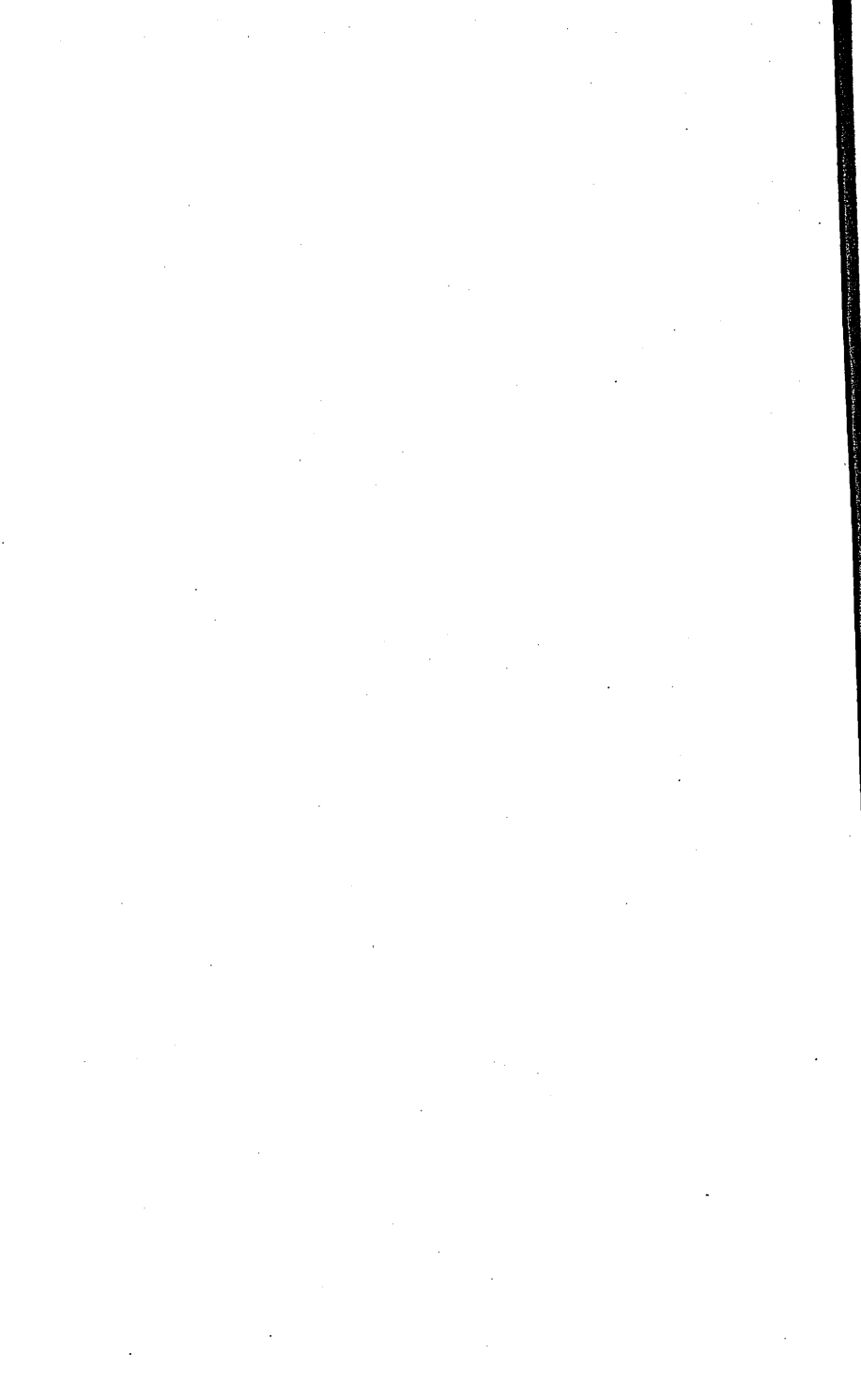
May it not be that we need to discriminate between two quite different processes which we may call "repression" and "suppression"? Here is a man facing, let us say, the question of drink. He can "repress" this desire or "suppress" it. If he "represses" it he says: "Gee, I'd like to drink! But if I do, I'll be fired or my wife will give me 'Hail Columbia'! I can't do it; but, my, how I'd like to!" That is repression, and it is psychologically disastrous. But, on the other hand, he can "suppress" his desire. In this case he acquires some reliable information about alcohol, how it tells lies to the nervous system, paralyzes the brain, ruins the digestive tract and disintegrates the personality. Looking at all the facts he says: "I have too many interesting and important things to do to fool with booze. I wouldn't soak my watch in hydrochloric acid. Why should I corrode my brains with alcohol?" A desire thus dealt with, given its day in court and then cast out, is no longer dangerous. It has been *suppressed*, not *repressed*. It is the difference between a mutineer who has merely been shut up below hatches, free to do all the damage he can to the internal workings of the ship, and one who has been compelled to "walk the plank"!

After organizing yourself and deciding where you want to go, what values you will put first, what goals you will seek, what next? Relate yourself! You can do it on a relatively low level of back-slapping conviviality. Even that is better than being a recluse or a hermit. Humanity is social, and human life must lose itself in comradeship to find itself. But better still is it to relate yourself with your fellow men on the higher levels of great social reforms, great community services, great common ideals for the nation and the world. Life never grows old or stale or commonplace for the man who links himself to some great fellowship of learning like a university or some great commonwealth of service like the Church.

Noblest of all the ways in which a man may relate himself is by communion with God. When a man says in the depth of his soul, "I come, O God, to do thy will," he has related himself to that which is greatest in all the universe. His life can no longer be trivial or meaningless. He has linked himself to the highest thing he knows.

Finally, fulfil yourself! Life should be a progressive integration. There are people who refuse to grow up. They are always trying to resist the on-going process of life. But life is a good process and every stage in it has its own rewards. It is good to be a boy — but not forever! It is good to be a young man in college — but not forever! It is good to be middle-aged in the full current of life. But it may also be good to be old, and it is our Christian faith that it may also be good to die! We must trust life and fulfil each stage of it, believing that each year, well lived, prepares for greater years ahead. As Browning put it into the mouth of the old Jewish Rabbi ben Ezra:

Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life, for which the first was made:  
Our times are in his hand  
Who saith, "A whole I planned,  
Youth shows but half;  
Trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"



## **THE DIVIDED MIND**

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## THE DIVIDED MIND

*A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.*—James 1:8.

THERE was never a man who didn't have trouble now and then in making up his mind. It is a terrible experience. To balance one argument against another a dozen times, to weigh them and weigh them and find that they weigh just even; and finally to jump one way or the other just because you can't stand still any longer, is like having a run of fever.

It is not merely uncomfortable, it is weakening; if you keep it up long enough it runs into paralysis. While you are deciding you can hardly do anything else; and the more you can't decide, the more you can't do anything else. Nobody can march strong while he is on the fence.

It is no wonder that young people facing the choice of a business or a profession get into this condition. With no particular leading in any direction, and with the time to do something drawing nearer every day, they walk on the edge of a panic and often go this way or that, not because they want to, but because school is out and they have to go somewhere.

This is not surprising. But there are also people with whom this double-mindedness becomes a lifelong habit. They wear themselves out deciding whether to put on this dress or the other, to carry an umbrella or to leave it at home, to accept or decline. They get lost in the cracks between the alternatives.

Now life depends about ninety per cent on getting yourself organized, so that you can go. Once under motion, you can turn around or back up and find the right road if you haven't got it now. But to lose in debate the time for action is to lose life itself. Therefore to amount to anything, one must get rid of the divided mind. It makes a man useless. It also makes him ugly. The first canon of every art is the canon of unity.

In a picture, a building, a poem, any work of art, the first rule is, nothing there that does not belong. Ornamentation is secondary; it may be as simple as a Greek vase or a Negro folk song. Massiveness is unnecessary; it may be as small as a cameo. But if it is to be a work of art, there must be nothing in it that does not fit. It must be a unity.

Now life is the greatest of all the arts, and the first test of it is the test of unity. Does everything in a man's life belong there? If it does, he has integrity. That is wholeness. That is character. He is not a lot of shreds and patches; he is a unit. Honesty is the basis of all character, because without it a man falls apart. But give a man honesty, so that there won't be a crack running through him anywhere; then give him good taste and good judgment, so that what he does is not merely genuine but fitting and appropriate — and he is a picture where every line counts and there is not a color that should not be there; he is music without discord: and the first step toward all this is the single mind.

Not the *narrow* mind. Not one without diversity or contrast. What gives perennial charm to the character of Lincoln is the meeting and the union in it of traits so opposite: sympathy and determination, gaiety and sadness, buffoonery and eloquence, the strain of backwoods coarseness and the delicacy that breathes through the Gettysburg address. A recent writer has called attention to Roosevelt's friendship for Root and Harri-man, Gompers and "Boss" Platt; for "cowboys, warriors, cardinals, prize fighters, *literati*, *savants*, farmers, engineers, big and little business men, common folk and highbrows"; his love of publicity, his fondness for his cowboy clothes and his roughrider suit, and also his deep strain of seriousness, as when he said, "Only those are fit to live who do not fear to die." The same writer contrasts Wilson's aloofness and his absolute need of sympathy, his scholarly habits and his practical political shrewdness, his undoubted ambition and his statement, perfectly sincere, "I would rather lose in a cause that will some day win, than win in a cause that will some day lose."

The unified mind is not the narrow mind. Mr. Glenn Frank

once wrote an article on Mr. Bryan, entitled, "A Mind Divided Against Itself." He said that Mr. Bryan was a liberal in politics but a conservative in religion; a realist in politics, in religion an emotionalist. In politics he trusted human nature, in religion he distrusted it. He believed in political freedom but in spiritual bondage. In politics he brought everything to the practical test, in religion his only standard was correct belief. This inconsistency was a source of weakness to him, hindered his usefulness and will increasingly affect his reputation. But in the practical sense in which I use the term, Mr. Bryan had no divided mind. He was not forever hesitating, starting in and then backing out, beginning and then quitting. Even when he was off on the wrong foot, he was off. He knew what he wanted. Like these other men, he saw his goal, chose it, steered for it.

Life is short. The time you spend in making up your mind what to do, you have to subtract from the time that is left to do it in. You've only so much energy. Whatever I spend in starting and stopping and backing and filling, I have that much less left for the trip itself. The one thing I can't stand is to be pulled and hauled in opposite directions. It wears me out; it renders me ugly and useless. A man must get rid of the divided mind. How shall he do it?

First, by recognizing that some ideals and ambitions just won't go with others; we must let go of some in order to hold to the others. You may entertain in turn, the ambition to be a ball-player, a movie star, a scholar, a business man, a statesman. And within reason you can realize any one of them, and one of them after another. But not all of them at the same time. You can't be a sculptor like Lorado Taft and at the same time a boxer like Gene Tunney. Not a great organist and a great football player, at the same time. Not a flyer like Lindbergh and at the same time a physicist like Einstein. To be any kind of man, you have to be some one kind, and not half a dozen. You must choose. And you must renounce. To start for all the goals in the world is not to start for any. That's clear.



And if you ask how you are going to cut out these other and conflicting aims and so start for one goal, you've got to do it by getting hold of some one purpose that is big enough, and that you are sufficiently in love with, to make it easy to let go of the rest. When you get some one thing in your mind that you are going to do, are bound to do, you are rid of the divided mind at one stroke. It may be a humanitarian object, like abolition with Garrison; or a political ideal, as was the unification of Germany with Bismarck; or the advancement of some scientific doctrine, like that of evolution with Darwin. Most men of good parts who have failed have done so because they did not have any one great object to work toward. They have not been able to say, as Paul said, "*This one thing I do.*" Accounting for the comparative failure of Robert Burns, Carlyle said: "He was nothing wholly. Pleasure, in one form or another, was his only aim." "Nothing wholly." So the greatest lyric genius of his time and his nation, who might have remade the course of English literature, left behind a few great poems and a mingled mass of wonder and regret, because he never got himself together, never got reconciled with himself; was always a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways, because he was never in love with anything bigger than his own momentary satisfaction. But the Apostle Paul, because he had one great controlling purpose, because he was in love with one great ideal, because he could say "I determined to know nothing except Jesus Christ," laid a hand upon the religious life of the world which we cannot shake off even to this day.

If you say, "I am no apostle, nor scientist, nor reformer; I have no great talent; if I did my best I couldn't do anything startling," I reply, It isn't necessary to do anything startling. About the biggest, most difficult ambition a man can have is the ambition to be an absolutely good man, to fill a worthy place in life, to do his duty every day, never to do anything for the sake of his own pleasure or profit merely, but to live for the good of the whole. That ambition you can have. And if you have it, if it goes deep in you, if it masters you, then you are rid once and for all of the divided mind. You cannot stop for

things that run contrary to it. The things that stand in the way of your reaching it are no longer temptations to you. They are just obstacles, to be pushed out of the way as fast as you come to them.

Now this is why religion is and always has been the greatest unifier of human personality. Other interests can do it also, but away and beyond all others, religion is the force that takes men who have drifted and dawdled and played at life and been in danger of squandering themselves, and it turns them into soldiers from whom all indecision and double-mindedness drop utterly away, and who fight a great fight. These men have not all been great men, like Paul and Luther and John Calvin and John Knox. Many of them have been persons of little education, like Dwight Moody, or of ordinary parts like S. H. Hadley, or quiet self-effacing women like Edith Cavell or Florence Nightingale. And most of them have never come into the limelight, or got onto the front page at all, but have spent their lives riding a frontier circuit or preaching in country parishes, or mending and cooking and dusting inside four walls of one house. And this great purpose, this unifying ambition, this great life-job, which can rid you of your double-mindedness and set you going on one high road from which you will never stray, is just as open to you as it was to Francis of Assisi or to Ignatius Loyola. The great enemy of the double mind, the great unifier of human personality, is and always has been religion.

I push this matter one step further and deeper. If you ask me why religion is the arch enemy of the double mind and the great unifier of human personality, I think it is because there is a Mind that pervades the universe. And that mind is not a double or a divided mind, but a mind absolutely and eternally single and at one with itself, set forever in one direction, against all evil and toward all good, living and working in all times and all places for the abolition of all injustice and the realization of all righteousness; with no little purpose like that of its own glory but pushing on forever only for the happiness and the spirituality and the salvation of all. Every life that

has no commanding purpose, or whose one purpose is a little or a mean or a self-centered one, is doomed from the start to failure, — because it is at war not only with itself, but with this mind that pervades the universe. And that is why the single-minded man, with the great commanding purpose which religion supplies, rises out of his littleness, sloughs off his meanness, and climbs in spite of his natural incapacities to real greatness, — because he works with this mind that pervades the universe.

I look upon religion, therefore, the love of God, the devotion to a great ideal, the discipleship with Jesus Christ — and I set it before you today — not as a means of escaping some penalty in the world to come, not as an eternal life-insurance policy, but as the one great escape, here and now, from the littleness and the inefficiency that always threaten us. We are little enough, anyway, uncertain enough, wavering enough, halting and trivial and weak enough. Why should we be more so than we have to be? Take God into your life. Attune your mind to his. Put yourself to school to Jesus Christ. It will bring quiet in your own soul, an end to the warfare in your mind, your usefulness to your fellows, and rest and peace with God. Amen.

## **THINGS THAT ABIDE**

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## THINGS THAT ABIDE

*And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain.*—Hebrew 12:27.

THIS text is not clear as crystal. Every translator, from the time of King James to the days of Professor Goodspeed, has tried his hand at it. It is the kind of verse that yields little meaning at first, so the casual reader passes it by. And yet it is often good for one to poke away at a smouldering text like this and see if it can be made to burn again as it burned in the heart of the original writer.

The text is full of contrasts. Here are things that can be shaken and things that can not be shaken. Some are man-made and transient, others are permanent and divine. These transient things must be shaken out of the way in order that the permanent things may have a chance to remain in the minds of men.

So here is the text, as I understand it, not in a word-for-word translation but in a free paraphrase. "What I am trying to say is this. Things are being shaken. Very well! Let them shake. They are man-made anyway. Besides they are being shaken in order that the things which cannot be shaken may abide."

These words might have been written for today. For there are strange parallels between the modern world and that ancient world. There is the same feeling of chaos. Old foundations seem to be crumbling, cherished customs falling away, hoary beliefs held up to criticism or to scorn.

There is also an uneasy feeling of insecurity. Things are not fixed and final as they used to be. To be sure they never "were as they used to be," but now at least they aren't. This sense of instability is common among both the old and the young.

The difference is that the old view the present situation with dismay while the young look upon it with zest. The old say, "We don't know what things are coming to!" The young say, "We don't know where we're going, but we are moving and we have speed." The old say, "You are tearing our world to pieces." And the young reply, "Things are shaking, are they? Well, let them shake."

Like the citizens of that ancient world, we have lost our regard for much that is old. Many ideas and behavior patterns which were firmly entrenched in the life of our fathers are being torn out and cast aside. Reverence for the old just because it is old, respect for law just because it was once enacted, a regard for external authority over against the intrinsic worth of whatever is authorized — these are being shaken.

The inviolability of the social and industrial order, rigid lines of class and racial cleavage, the permanence of the marriage relationship, the paramount place of the church among the constructive forces in our civilization — these are being shaken.

The validity of specific moral standards, the finality of Biblical revelation, certain long-accepted interpretations of the person and work of Christ, belief in a personal God who has a moral purpose for his world and who is sustaining it with his love and governing it with his power — these are being shaken.

There is no doubt that a shaking process of colossal proportions is taking place before our eyes. But the main question is not What is being shaken? but What is standing up under the storm? What is enduring the test? No thoughtful person can avoid the challenge of that question. However inadequate his knowledge may be, he is driven to attempt some kind of answer. What is it that abides?

First, let us consider the *habit of critical thinking*. This is not new. It is as old as Socrates and Plato, as Isaiah and the author of Job. Like every straight-thinking critic, it is our custom to look things in the eye and call them by their exact names. We pass judgment on everything, from styles in clothing to styles in thinking. We subject our laws, customs and institutions to the most searching examination. We bend

backward to get rid of sentimentality and prejudice. We expose the private life of those who run for public office, and we publish abroad whatever they do or fail to do while they hold office. "Nothing is hidden that shall not be revealed."

We demand to know what our various institutions are doing and to what degree they are fulfilling their functions. We insist that they shall declare and more sharply define their functions. We say to the Church, "You profess that it is your task to produce men and women of spiritual power and moral excellence. Very well! Are you doing it and how do you know you are doing it?" We say to the college, "You announce that your purpose is to take young men and women and draw out their latent abilities and enable them to think clearly, to judge wisely and to serve their generation effectively. Are you doing it, and how do you know that you are? Is a student's ability to secure a degree any guaranty that you have done your job?"

In every realm of life the question is not What are your opinions? but What are the facts? Probably we have the scientific spirit to thank for this. We subject things and men and experiences to inquiry and tests and measurements, and then the tools for testing are subjected to more tests. What lies at the bottom of this habit is a passion for the truth, whatever it may cost. A conviction is abroad that whatever is worth keeping can stand the test and that whatever can not endure the shaking does not deserve to endure. Of course, the habit involves a continuous process of appraisal. One stands today open-doored to the truth from whatever quarter it may come, and he will stand there tomorrow and tomorrow. He must be quite prepared to say that today's securities may turn out to be tomorrow's insecurities.

That there is great value in such an attitude we must all admit. It doesn't seem likely that we shall abandon it and return to the old-fashioned way of accepting everything on somebody's say-so. And yet one must indulge in a word of caution. We may be developing in the rank and file just a skeptical attitude toward everything without providing them



with any criteria for making their appraisals. One may indulge in destructive criticism without bothering to try to discover any constructive way of rebuilding what has been destroyed. One may even think that all values can be subjected to the same sort of measuring instruments. Of course, that is not possible when one remembers that there are values practical and esthetic, commercial and artistic, material and spiritual. One ought to be critical, indeed, but let him also be critical of his criteria.

Things are shaking, are they? Let them shake, for a second thing abides. It is the *recognition of the value of certain long-tested moral standards*. One senses such values in the business world. For example, men may dispute the exact definition of an honest act, but they know that the structure of our business world would fall to pieces if men could not trust one another. If men meant "no" when they said "yes," if a man's word had no more solidity than a ring of cigarette smoke, the fabric of our industrial life would tear apart.

We may talk about the passing away of old moral standards. We may say that our ethical systems are just the result of human experiment and that they are now and will continue to be in a state of flux. But when it comes to actual living day in and day out with our fellow men, we expect them to be honest and punctual and efficient and faithful, just as we always have. When we order a taxi to take us to the eight o'clock train we expect it to be at our door on time. We expect contractors to do their work as they agree, a debtor to pay his bills, a banker to be scrupulous in the investment of the depositor's money, a doctor to give his conscientious attention to the patient, a lawyer to look out for his client's interest, and a public servant to be faithful to the people's vote of confidence in him.

To be sure, our moral standards are being criticized. Their humble origins are being exposed and their failures are being exploited. But we have not witnessed the collapse of the old tried and stalwart virtues. Cowardice has not supplanted courage in the esteem of men. Fickleness has not displaced

fidelity. Trickery has not driven honesty from the field. Greed, lust, carelessness, anger, malice, suspicion, giants though they are, are not in possession of the land. Integrity and promptness, fidelity and endurance, kindness and wholesomeness have stood the test of man's experimentation with life. No new moral values seem likely at the present moment to take their place. One does not walk out into this troubled world unbuttressed by these old moral foundations.

Things are shaking? Of course, but, third, *friendship abides*. Men cannot live without it. The possession of power and wealth and culture has not made men superior to the old human need of companionship. When one is sick or in poverty or in prison, about all that is left is friendship.

It is true that one may point to the breakdown of friendship and to infidelity in love and may grow bitter and cynical because of some personal experience. He may scorn every expression of sentiment, criticize the custom of sending Christmas and birthday greetings, pride himself on his independence and self-sufficiency and all that; but when the day's work is done and he goes to his home or his club or his room, he likes to feel that there are a few persons to whom he means something and who are glad that he is still alive.

Despite much that has been said on the subject, I doubt if men are depressed by the magnitude of the universe and their own relative physical insignificance. They are depressed rather by the suspicion that they don't amount to much in the eyes of other persons. Many a man can endure the "overwhelming news" that the earth which is his home is less than a grain of sand on the cosmic shore, and never blink an eye; but let some fraternity that he would like to join pass him by, or some girl in whom he is interested tell him that he is a failure, and his little personal universe will begin to fall to pieces.

Man hasn't outgrown his need for plain old-fashioned comradeship. He knows that without it he would be living in a bleak and barren world. Friendship lasts. In its higher ranges we call it love. Paul called it that and said it was

the greatest thing in the world. He said it was standing the test. "Now *abideth* love." We need to love and to be loved. If we have love we can do anything, endure anything, suffer anything. But without love or friendship, life becomes unbearable.

Things are shaking. Let them shake; for in the fourth place, *courage abides*. It is well that this is so, for men must always face the facts of evil and suffering and the reason for their presence in the world. Evil and suffering, and the haunting fear of them, come to all men. Our boasted freedom and efficiency are frustrated at a hundred points. Man finds himself matched against the stubborn forces of the world. The universe says to him in a variety of ways, "You must do thus and so."

Sometimes it says, "You must go on living without your property, without your former health, without your son or your daughter, without your husband or your wife, without your home, without the fulfillment of some cherished hope." And to the glory of man he goes on living, with a courage and poise and solemn joy that baffle all academic explanation. It is not merely in circles of culture and wealth that one finds such courage. Often the most superb type of courage is to be seen in circles of ignorance and poverty.

Near the business center of New Haven, I have seen for a number of years at Christmas time an old man and woman selling Christmas wreaths. A year ago the old woman was alone. I talked to her as I bought my wreaths, and said, "You are alone this year." "Yes," she said, "my husband was killed a few weeks ago, while chopping in the woods. But I have to go on with the wreaths. Mister, (holding up a wreath) there's a pretty one! "

What are you going to do with people like that? Break down their defense at one point and they will build it up at another. Deprive them of the use of their legs (as life did one of my students) and they will go spinning around the campus in a wheel chair, smiling as they go. There they are, matching their puny strength against the cosmos. Shake them

until everything about them seems to be tumbling to the ground and there they stand superb in their courage. When life says to them "You must," they calmly reply "We can!"

Things are shaking, are they? But in the fifth place, *God abides*. To be sure, on this point, there is sharp disagreement of opinion. Some people are doing away with God altogether. A good many ideas about God are being subjected to a severe shaking.

The old tribal god, who defends one nation in its attacks upon another nation and who makes his devotees say "God with us," is being shaken. The denominational god who is concerned more with Catholics than he is with Protestants, or with Protestants more than with Catholics, and who serves only to deepen the bigotry of his devotees, is being shaken. The god who is at the beck and call of any senseless petition and whose supernatural help is claimed in prayer as a substitute for individual effort and communal cooperation is being shaken.

And yet, God abides. Somewhat we do not get rid of him. Is it because man is living in such a baffling world? Despite our knowledge of things and processes, we are faced on every hand by mystery. We cannot always act on the basis of knowledge. Often we must act by faith. Man is forever confronted by the ultimate problem of life. What is the meaning of life? Is it worth what it costs? If one goes on living, it is because he has faith that somehow it is worth while.

One recognizes that he is living in a world where he is driven to seek the truth, where moral ideals last, where friendship stands up under the strain and where courage persists. But why should these things be? What produced a world where such ideals are esteemed and striven for? So man seeks some eternal ground which can guarantee the validity of his ideals and his endeavors. And that eternal ground, that deep undergirding, that great on-going purpose that we cannot get on without, men still find in God.

Things are shaking. Yes, but finally, *Christ abides*. To be sure there have been many changes in men's thought of him during these nineteen centuries. The older doctrines about

his origin, his physical resurrection, his miracles and the place of his death in the divine plan of redemption are questioned by many modern minds. The Christ of the creeds, like the Christ of ecclesiasticism, is being shaken.

But men are not doing away with him. I suppose it is because we have to live, and life is not a clearly defined road of shining concrete. It is a steep and winding trail. And any one who has gone ahead and tramped that trail and left blazes along his path we can not and we do not forget. The religious books that are coming from the press, together with magazine articles and the questions that are being asked, indicate a deep and lasting interest in Jesus. The things he did, the words he spoke, the spirit he embodied, still grip our imaginations and our wills. They constitute the noblest challenge to high personal adventure and to social and industrial and international reconstruction. Men are saying today as their fathers said, though in different language, "Jesus Christ found the trail of life."

We are seeing in Jesus, however, not merely the blazer of a trail, but a Master Craftsman, and with new insight we are becoming increasingly sure that Jesus was right in what he had to say about life and about God. With him, we are growingly certain that underneath and throughout all the phenomena of life there is a Master Mind, a Master Workman, whom he called "Father," whose purpose we ought to discover, whose power we ought to utilize and whose approval we ought to seek.

Things are shaking, are they? They are being shaken in order that the things which can not be shaken may abide.

**“BE STRONG”**

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## “ BE STRONG ”

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*Quit you like men, be strong.*—I Corinthians 16:13.

THIS challenging word of the latest and greatest of the apostles to the Corinthian Christians still deserves the attention of all who are seeking to achieve life at its best. It is a maxim as pertinent to modern men as it was to those who first heard it.

The meaning of this counsel to be strong is made clear by considering its author. We all have heard something of that more recent cult of the strong man, ruthless in pursuit of his own ends, of which Nietzsche was the prophet. But that St. Paul was not thinking of virility of this sort is evident from the fact that he himself was not a strong man in this sense. Like many others of history's most effective figures, he was small in stature and physically weak. His was one of the strongest personalities in the annals of mankind, however. And of course the strength which he illustrates is the strength which he enjoins. It consists not in the might which controls others against their will but in the might which controls self, bringing all one's own energies into play.

There is especial need among us to emphasize this kind of strength, which is peculiar to man, in contrast with brute force, which man shares with the lower animals; for the current fad in popular psychology is to deny that man has any distinctive status whatever.

The philosophy of an age is correlated with its dominant interest. In scientific circles today, two opposing philosophies contend for the mastery. Among students of pure science, the evolutionary theory leads increasingly to a biological inter-



pretation of the universe. And this recognition of the primacy of life affords room for the further recognition of personality, that is, the special nature of man, as the most advanced and complex manifestation of life; while the next logical step beyond this is to acknowledge a personal quality in the universe as a whole. Thus pure science tends towards an essentially religious view of the world.

The voices heard chiefly in the market-place in these days, however, are not those of pure scientists but of the scholars whose concern is mainly with applied science, or technology; and the dominant concern of applied scientists is, for obvious reasons, with the machine. Of course they also are moved to interpret all things in terms of their central idea. Hence many of them claim that life is simply a specially conditioned chemical reaction; that man is but the most intricate of known machines, all his thoughts and actions being inevitably determined by the mechanism of his reflexes, and the notion of any freedom of choice on his part being purely an illusion. According to this view, which finds its ultimate expression in the extravagances of Watsonian Behaviorism, man is what his instincts make him, and no more; and the first step toward wisdom is admission of this depressing but inescapable fact.

Now, that the mechanistic view is of real utility for some purposes, no one, I suppose, will deny. That it is true as far as it goes is evidenced by the fact that practical results of demonstrable value do at some points follow from applying the methods of Behaviorist psychology. But clearly it is but a half-truth. It is an over-simplification; for it involves a closing of the mind to one of the unmistakable aspects of reality. The final test of truth is immediate and unavoidable experience. Whatever we know at first hand, and cannot help knowing, is true. That in many ways we behave like machines is one of these direct data; but that we are more than machines, that there is such a thing as personality, and that personality does in some measure originate action undetermined by mechanical antecedents, is another of these data. There are two sides of experience, both of which it is given us to know beyond dis-

pute, so that to deny either of them is to falsify our philosophy. One is the quantitative; it is in this realm that mechanistic principles are valid. The other is the qualitative, and here personal considerations hold unrivaled sway. It is as absurd to apply the quantitative tests of science to the qualitative phases of consciousness as it would be to attempt to measure metrical feet in poetry with a foot rule. He who is willing to face all the facts must admit that his instincts, such as they are, good and evil alike, and whether normal or exceptional, are given him by heredity and environment, and, when objectively considered, can be explained in mechanical terms; but he must also insist, because he knows it is true, that he himself is other and more than the sum of his instincts, and that they obey his free choice as to the ways in which he will express them. So a man is not what his instincts make him, but rather what he makes of his instincts.

That in practice we have to assume that personality, in the full sense of the term, is real and effective is indicated by even the most casual consideration of our behavior. For instance, the man who pursues learning may feel that he is brought of necessity, by the learning he acquires, to a mechanistic view of his own nature. Nevertheless, in continuing to pursue learning with enthusiasm, he also feels that he does so by his own choice. If he preferred, he need learn no more. Since he does care to go on learning, however, he must apply himself to his studies, disciplining his mind by the assertion of his will to exclude distractions and to achieve a fruitful concentration of mental effort. Thus the behaviorist in theory appears as a personalist in practice, and cannot get away from belief in himself as a voluntary agent.

Again, a man may be so enamored of machines and objective processes as to deride all types of thought and endeavor which are in any degree influenced by other than material aims. He cannot, however, avoid the conviction that his own adoption of the career which seems to him most reasonable and most likely to be profitable has been achieved by deliberately preferring it to occupations which he deems irrational and un-

profitable. He may think that all men are fools who do not order their lives as he does. But he blames them for their folly, acknowledging thereby that they might have done otherwise had they so chosen; while, openly or secretly, he vaunts his own superior sagacity, thereby proclaiming that he has exercised a creditable discrimination instead of merely responding to irresistible compulsion.

Perhaps the most telling indication of the voluntary choice which is consciously exercised by all men, even mechanists, is to be found in the realm of human associations; for here both instinct and the supervising will are most clearly in evidence. It is a commonplace that we do not and cannot choose which shall be the people toward whom we feel a natural inclination, and which shall be they from whom we feel a natural aversion. The springs of love and of hate are so entirely beyond our control that we should appear indeed in this regard to be mere automata. If we try to command our hearts, we soon find that a simulated liking always remains artificial and carries no conviction to any one. At the same time, however, we select, among those for whom we feel a spontaneous predilection, just which are they whom we can trust enough, or from whose friendship we can profit enough, to warrant indulging our impulse; and we put the others, kindly but firmly, out of mind. Every one of us has met many individuals for whom it would be easy to entertain a warm attachment, but for whom we have never allowed ourselves to form such an attachment, because discretion forbade it. The theoretical mechanist who in college prefers, as personal friends, some of his classmates to the rest of them, and who later marries a wife for some better reason than cold convenience, denies by so doing the adequacy of his philosophy to his experience.

The notion that man is a machine and nothing more is derived from a one-sided preoccupation with technology, which is natural in a period in which the machine is doing more than any other device ever utilized to raise the general level of material well-being. But when this notion is treated as a comprehensive philosophy instead of being intelligently employed

as a methodological foreshortening of perspective, useful in dealing with certain concrete human problems, it demonstrates its inadequacy at once, because nobody can live consistently as if this philosophy were true. There is more involved, however, than simply a mistake in theory. For unfortunately, while we all tacitly assume the genuineness of personality and its peculiar powers when it is to our advantage to do so, those of us who regard it as an illusion have a habit of taking refuge in our false philosophy to excuse all the elements in our behavior which are likely to incur blame. So long as things go smoothly, we take ourselves for granted. So soon as we get into a tight place, we tell ourselves that we are not, and never have been, able to help ourselves—the very idea of a self being, indeed, a mischievous misconception. When trouble comes to us, and still more when we make trouble for others, we hold that we are not to be blamed but to be pitied; all sensible men will doubtless be sorry for us, instead of finding fault; while our conscience might just as well keep quiet, for conscience is, after all, but the phantom voice of a baseless fancy of personal responsibility. Thus, if we fall into the error of undertaking to explain personality in exclusively mechanical terms, we are likely in practice to try to eat our cake and have it too. This result illustrates the fact that the view itself is based on a dishonest refusal to take into consideration all of the data given to us in that immediate awareness of truth which alone is, in the last analysis, worthy to be called knowledge.

So, in an age when the voice of the mechanist is clamant in the market-place, it behooves us, as sincere, honest, and well-intentioned men, to heed the advice which St. Paul gave to the Corinthians long ago, in a quite different situation. We must stop trying to think of ourselves part of the time as mere machines, in order to plead a vain excuse for our shortcomings and moral infirmities, and begin instead to quit us like men, and to be strong with that strength of character which is humanity's distinctive and most splendid attribute. However we came to be what we are, and perhaps the process of becom-

ing can be most simply construed in mechanical terms, in any event we are men; and men are free to make what they will of their instincts, to mold their careers in accordance with their ideals, and to discharge — or, alas, if they should so prefer, to avoid — the obligations which conscience enjoins upon them, and for which their own hearts and their fellow men will hold them responsible.

Let us see how a thoroughly human point of view will modify our reactions in the three types of behavior which have already been under our observation. First, as to learning. The man who thinks of himself and the world purely in quantitative terms seeks learning only in order to take advantage of its utility. Technology rather than science is his god of truth; though in truth science is the god, and technology his incarnation. On the other hand, he who appreciates the marvel of man's capacity to plumb the obscurities of the universe and to understand the laws which govern its operations will choose to pursue learning throughout his life, with ever continued research and ever broadening vision and deepening insight, for the sake of embracing truth itself; that is to say, in disinterested love of truth just because it is truth, and not because he can use it for his own ends. It is only through the disinterested pursuit of truth, which is characteristic of the human mind, that technology itself can thrive and progress; for applied science is the offspring of pure science, and without its continuing support would soon fall into decline.

Again, in choosing a career, he who is honest enough to admit in theory what he cannot deny in practice, that man is more than a machine, will feel so general and absorbing an interest in men at large and in the whole amazing endeavor of mankind to climb out of the mud toward the stars, instead of being concerned only for himself, that his purpose in working will be to contribute to the sum total of human aspiration some element of abiding and socially profitable achievement. Instead of working for himself, he will forget himself in his work for the sake of his brothers, and will then begin for the first time to get out of work the rich harvest of happiness

which it yields to a generous motive but steadily refuses to self-seeking.

Finally, he who acknowledges the validity and dignity of personality and seeks to be strong with the peculiar strength of men, will no longer choose, among those whom his nature predisposes him to love, on the basis of the momentary satisfaction he can win from their companionship. Rather, he will give himself in sacrificial devotion to enduring human loyalties, laying down his own advantage, whenever that may be necessary, in order that his affection may minister to the well-being of its objects instead of merely grasping benefits for himself. Mankind as a whole progresses in exact proportion to the prevalence of self-denying fidelity in human relations; while the individual finds that growth in personality which love alone can give, in exact proportion to the ascendancy of this motive throughout the region of his personal associations.

To insist that we are men, instead of alleging with false and debasing humility that we are merely machines, is to discover and promote an increasing consciousness of personal values as the chief and, indeed, the only ultimate goods to be desired. And when the qualitative aspect of living thus comes into dominance in our thinking, reducing the quantitative aspect to a strictly instrumental rôle, we are prepared for the first time to regard with open mind and with a favorable predisposition the two great beliefs, in God and in immortality, which have historically been the dynamics of the upward movement of our race. For it comes to seem absurd to us to suppose that personality, the dominant fact in our consciousness, should be subject to extinction by death's destruction of the mechanism through which it functions in our present environment of time and space; while it comes to seem inevitable to us to attribute a personal quality to the universe as a whole, and universal personality, producing and conserving personal values, is what men mean by God. The first step towards a religious understanding of life is in the acknowledgment of the intrinsic, irreducible, and unique worth of human personality, which, let me repeat, is an original datum of experi-

ence, so that we cannot abstract our minds from a due accounting of it without inviting error in all our calculations about the world.

But, whether or not this religious view commends itself at this time to your approval, we are all seeking, by various paths, the good life; and by the good life we can hardly mean less than that we shall live on terms of friendship with ourselves, enjoying self-respect and cherishing a continuous aspiration after fuller development of the best in our personalities. But we can never find this good life if we allow ourselves to conduct our lives under the misguidance of the error that we are machines and nothing more; that we are what our instincts make us. We must embrace within our view the full-rounded truth that we are what we make of our instincts. As we go forth to do our work, and make our friends, and fill our years with those problematic events of the future, as yet unknown, which hang upon the determination of our free choice, the first principle of that true success which will bring sweetness rather than bitterness to our hearts in increasing measure as time goes by, is that we shall heed the apostle's challenging counsel of old: *Quit you like men, be strong.*

## **SELF-EXPRESSION AND RESPONSIBILITY**



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## SELF-EXPRESSION AND RESPONSIBILITY

*Am I my brother's keeper?* — Genesis 4:9.

IN the Hebrew story of creation and the genesis of human life the question of personal responsibility was very early raised. The first man born raised it. "Am I my brother's keeper?" The world has answered back in chorus: You certainly are; every man is his brother's keeper. It has judged Cain harshly. God, in the Hebrew story, does not answer Cain's question directly. He calls him to account for his evil deed and leaves unanswered the big question that Cain raises. The inflection in Cain's question indicates doubt in his mind as to whether he could justly be regarded as his brother's keeper. Personally I think Cain was right. At any rate I do not think that I am my brother's keeper.

I do not want anybody either to be my keeper or to regard himself as my keeper. I have my own way to make in this world, my own life to lead. I am jealous of my responsibility. I resent interference with what I regard as my sole prerogative. There is a course for me to pursue which no other can prescribe. What is right and true for me no other can determine. The agony of liberty must be mine. I feel that no one has a right to impose his standards upon me. I want no one to be keeper of my mind, my morals or my conscience. I do not like people who assume by their attitude that I need keeping and who appear to regard themselves as my keepers. For this reason I do not think that I should look upon myself as the moral guardian of others. I have no spiritual power of attorney. I am not responsible for their opinions or their conduct or their aims. I have my own life to live and they have their lives to live.

Some of the most unpleasant folks in the world are good people who exaggerate their responsibilities, assume an attitude

of censorship, and continually meddle in other people's business. One of the most beloved and helpful professors at the college which I attended, John M. Tyler, was one who steadily refused to offer himself either as a mentor to be heeded or as an example to be followed. He demanded freedom to live his life and he freely offered that freedom to others, and he died universally beloved and revered.

The claims of the weaker brother have been often urged in irksome fashion. Paul said, "If I make my brother to offend I will eat no meat while the world endureth." But that was his own free choice. His brother did not demand it and had no right to demand it. I am not required to refrain from consuming "hot dogs" at midnight or from reading certain literature, because other people's physical and moral digestion will not stand these things. I refuse to be in bondage to other men's weakness. I feel free to live my own life, cut my own moral pattern; in a word, to take the course that I think leads to fullest self-expression.

The only limitations to my freedom which I accept are those prescribed by the kind of world in which I am living. I find that I am in a world of law and order. There are certain physical ways of living which I am entirely free to pursue but which, if pursued, will suddenly or slowly deprive me of life itself. I may leap from the Eads Bridge over the Mississippi if I choose, but the probability is that I should not live to repeat the performance.

I find myself in a world of persons, each one as free as I am. Our freely determined individual purposes often collide. Our freedom is mutually limiting. We are mutually dependent. If others express themselves in certain ways, I cannot express myself at all. I reflect that the opposite must be true: that if I express myself in certain ways, they are deprived of self-expression; if I take a certain course, I deny them life and happiness and freedom. Science has herded us all together in these days as never previously. Our lives are interrelated though we come from the ends of the earth. We face the necessity of finding a way of living together.

As, in my freedom, I look around for some way out, I can find it only in an attitude of mutual regard. We have called this attitude brotherhood. I am not my brother's keeper but I *am* my brother's brother. God did not inquire of Cain "Where is thy ward?" but "Where is thy brother?" Brotherhood carries with it mutual expectations, mutual rights and duties.

In determining what this relation means in conduct, I inquire What have I a right to expect of a brother? These things at least:

First, I have a right to expect that he will not exploit me. He will not assume that I exist for his welfare. He has no claim on me that I have not on him. If he tries to make me a wheel to his chariot, I resent it as not just to me.

Second, I have a right to expect that he will not seek to supplant me in my father's estate. This is true whether I spell the word "father" with a capital or a small letter. He will grant me an equal share in my father's affection and regard. He will make no superior claims to his love or favor.

Third, if I have not a right to expect, I at least cannot easily avoid expecting, that if I am in need he will come to my side. He will help me carry my load. He will not leave me to my own poor devices and shut me up to my own slender resources. If he does do that and goes his own prosperous way while I suffer, I feel deeply hurt and disappointed. He has not proved himself a brother to me.

If I am right in my claims on my brother, then I see clearly the claims that my brother has on me. I have no right to exploit him. He is not a means to my ends but an end in himself. I owe him respect and reverence. He has rights equal to mine. His success is as essential as mine. I have no superior claims to happiness or fortune. I am not the darling of the universe, a favorite child of God or of destiny. The world is not my oyster. This is everybody's world and God is "everybody's God." Good fortune lays upon me great opportunities for service, which become not less than sacred obligations. I must help my brother bear his burden. This

will call at times for renunciation and sacrifice. But renunciation and sacrifice are not things that our fellow men can demand of us. They are things that we require of ourselves that we may be faithful to the ideal of brotherhood, that we may keep our sense of integrity and our self-respect. The glory of renunciation lies in the fact that no one can justly require it. It is our free gift. With what dignity Jesus said, "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself."

As, in my complete freedom, I respond to this inward sense of obligation toward my brother, I make the discovery that this sort of behavior seems to lead to that indefinable something that I call myself, or my life. I have a sense of well-being. It feels as if that were the way to life. The way feels real. It feels as if Galahad spoke a true word when sitting down in Merlin's chair he remarked, "If I lose myself, I save myself."

It looks as if there were something in that old, unpopular conception, duty; but duty thus conceived does not appear to be the "stern daughter of the voice of God." Duty to many is a hard-sounding word. It savors of irksome bondage. "I hate that word 'duty'," a friend remarked; "I have heard it all my life. I wish I never might hear it again." The trouble here was that duty was regarded as something which other people were requiring, possibly without warrant; at least, without our consent. Duty is rather that which we require of ourselves, or which our *selves* require of us. It is a course of action which we owe to ourselves, if we are going to realize ourselves. It is the road to that sense of inner satisfaction that is, perhaps, the best indication to a normal person that he is realizing his true relation to his fellow men. Self-expression thus goes hand in hand with moral obligation. It cannot be divorced from the sense of responsibility.

This conviction gains confirmation as one discovers something else about the world we live in. Determined as one may be that he is going to shape his own life quite by himself, one discovers that that is something which one does not and cannot do. The opening sentence of *David Copperfield* runs,

"Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life or whether that office will belong to anybody else, these pages must show." As one reads the story one feels that David Copperfield had something independent and original about him which gave him the deciding vote in his own career. But he was not alone. There were his aunt, Mr. Wickfield, Peggotty, Mr. Peggotty, Agnes, and even Mr. Micawber — they all made their contribution, consciously or unconsciously, to his life.

There is no such thing as a self-made person. Others help to make one whether one wills it or not. Life is a self-imparting force. It spreads as light spreads, as flame spreads, from candle to candle. "One loving heart sets another heart on fire." As John Stuart Mill said, "One wise man in a room makes the whole room wise." It was remarked of Disraeli, "He was not only brilliant in himself, but he made others brilliant." Personality is contagious. Neither good nor evil men can be quarantined. Beauty is its own argument. There are in every circle, every church, every college, some few people whose lives are of far more value to us than all the formal teaching and preaching that we ever hear. As Whittier puts it,

From scheme and creed the light goes out,  
The saintly fact survives;  
The blessed Master none can doubt,  
Revealed in holy lives.

This fact of our interrelated and mutually persuasive lives lies under Stevenson's creed, "There is one person whom it is my duty to make good and that is myself." "For their sakes," said One greater than Stevenson, "I sanctify myself." We do not create our own ideals, we select them. Others created them and others have helped us to maintain them. Because they live and have lived, we live also.

As one reflects, one discovers, often to one's amazement, to how great a degree one's life has been shaped by others. Their appealing lives have become his standards; the paths of the just have become his shining light; their conception of life has

become his truth. There are those who, without trespassing upon his personality, have helped to mold him. Walking with "life's unconscious ease" and attempting no conquest, they have persuaded him and made a disciple of him. There are those whose courage and cheer have kept him from cowardice, and whose fidelity has kept him from becoming a traitor. There are those whose sympathy and trust and genuine concern have helped him to keep full faith in himself. There are those who have been to him as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." There are those in whose presence, as in the shadow of Peter, one finds healing and hope.

Out of such reflections there tends to emerge an appreciation of one's own possibilities of personal influence. Whether we so elect or not, our lives become a part of other lives. That solemn fact is entirely beyond our control. All we can elect is the general direction along which our lives shall carry them; and if we reflect further that it is not our studied efforts that influence people so much as our spontaneous, genuine living, we shall avoid becoming self-conscious prigs.

To desire to be an asset to our fellow men is not priggish; it is the ambition to express ourselves, to fill our place in the interrelated world of humanity to which we belong.

There are certain people who lead what may be called shepherd lives. I borrow the figure from Matthew Arnold. He rebelled against a dour puritanical sense of obligation that would limit one's freedom irksomely. He believed in personal culture, in sweetness and light. But he believed that culture radiated. He believed that true culture leads one to a fine concern for others. A doubter in many respects, he never could get away from this central teaching of Christianity. His best reason for holding fast to this conception of life was the life of his own father, Thomas Arnold of Rugby. His poem "Rugby Chapel" is an exquisite tribute to his father as one who found his way to life in helping others find their way.

You remember the question:

What is the course of the life  
Of mortal men on the earth?

It is various, said Arnold. Some eat and drink; some fight  
and strive and fail; some struggle blindly, they scarcely know  
for what; some think

Not without action to die  
Fruitless, . . .

Travelers together, they start out only to be caught in a storm.  
A few strong ones weather the snow and the tempest and come  
to an inn where the aged host holds his lantern forward to scan  
their faces and inquires who are saved and who are left in the  
snow.

Sadly we answer: we bring  
Only ourselves! We lost  
Sight of the rest in the storm.

But not so Thomas Arnold:

But thou would'st not *alone*  
Be saved, my father! *alone*  
Conquer and come to thy goal,  
Leaving the rest in the wild.  
We were weary, and we  
Fearful, and we in our march  
Fain to drop down and to die.  
Still thou turnedst, and still  
Beckonedst the trembler, and still  
Gavest the weary thy hand.  
If, in the paths of the world,  
Stones might have wounded thy feet,  
Toil or dejection have tried  
Thy spirit, of that we saw  
Nothing: to us thou wast still  
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!  
Therefore to thee it was given  
Many to save with thyself,  
And, at the end of the day,  
O faithful shepherd, to come  
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.





**CAN WE BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?**

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## CAN WE BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?

THE question of miracles is not quite so burning a question as it was a generation or two ago, when to doubt the possibility, or even the historicity, of any miracle reported in the Bible was to lay yourself open to the charge of being an infidel or worse. Today one may say with Matthew Arnold, flatly and dogmatically, that miracles do not happen, without being called an atheist or an infidel or any other kind of unbeliever.

Orthodoxy once appealed to miracles in support of its belief in the divinity of Christ. Today it appeals to the divinity of Christ in support of its belief in miracles. Its argument once was that inasmuch as Jesus was able to walk on the water he must have been divine. Its argument today is that inasmuch as Jesus was divine it is not unreasonable to suppose that he was able to walk on the water. Even in circles professedly orthodox there is a noticeable and notable change of front with respect to the significance of miracles.

But the occasion of war is seldom, if ever, the real cause of it. Does anybody today believe that the sinking of the *Maine* was the cause of the Spanish-American War, or that the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand was the cause of the World War? And it is, I suspect, safe to assume that the occasion of theological controversy is seldom, if ever, the real cause of it. Today, in some sections of our country, one of the bones of theological contention is the birth of Jesus, some contending that he was born in the normal way, others contending that he was born in a miraculous way. Why does anybody want to maintain that Jesus was born in a miraculous way? Because he believes that a unique birth was essential to a unique life and that a unique life was essential to the salvation of the world. In this case the occasion of controversy is a particular dogma, but the underlying cause of it

is concern for the validity and redemptive power of Christianity. If persons who contend for the truth of a virgin birth should come to the conclusion that the validity and saving power of Christianity are not in the least dependent upon it, they would be no more concerned to maintain that Jesus was born of a virgin than they are to maintain that he knew Latin and Greek.

Why is anybody today concerned to maintain the historicity of such miracles as the crossing of the Red Sea or the feeding of the five thousand? Because if God once intervened in human affairs to the extent of setting aside natural laws he may, perchance, do so again; and some of us would like to believe that he could do so again in response to our earnest petition. If some one whom we greatly love should develop an inoperable cancer or hardening of the arteries, we should like to believe that in response to our prayers he might be saved regardless of the operation of natural law. In this case also the occasion and cause of controversy are not identical. The occasion is some Old or New Testament miracle; the cause is a yearning desire to believe that, *in extremis*, human beings may seek and expect divine intervention in their behalf.

That desire persists in generation after generation. There is, apparently, a multitude of people whose interest in Biblical miracles is no greater than their interest in Sanscrit, and who would not be for a moment concerned to maintain that any Biblically reported miracle ever occurred, were it not for the fact that they want to believe now in the possibility of divine interference and entertain the not unreasonable suspicion that if you deny that miracles have occurred in the past, you can hardly expect them to occur in the future. And so this question of miracles, though it is not the burning question in theological controversy that it used to be, is nevertheless a very live issue still.

It is a well-known fact that the Bible reports all sorts of miraculous occurrences: an axe-head floats; a rod suddenly becomes a serpent; a bush burns but is not consumed; the sun's shadow moves backward on a dial; before a fleeing host

the sea divides; a man is thrown into a den of lions, kept purposely hungry so that they will devour him, but is not devoured; three men are hurled into a burning fiery furnace and come out unscathed; water is turned into wine; a multitude are fed with five loaves and two fishes; at a word of command a tree is withered, a storm is stopped, and persons pronounced dead are restored to life.

Now, at a very early age a child is prepared to believe that all of these miracles actually occurred. He sees no incongruity between such occurrences as these and the arrangements of a world which contains Alices in Wonderland, Cinderellas, and fairy godmothers. But as he grows older he takes note of the strange and somewhat disturbing fact that miracles such as these no longer occur. Axe-heads no longer float, bushes no longer burn without being consumed, people who are dead are no longer restored to life. He may make the discovery that miraculous cures such as those Jesus performed are still being performed. If he does make that discovery, he will make along with it the further discovery that miraculous cures are being performed today because they can be performed in accordance with law; and seeing that miracles which upset law no longer occur, he begins to wonder whether they ever did occur. That wonder fills him with uneasiness, not only about the past, but about the present and the future. If God never did intervene in human affairs to the extent of setting natural law aside, is it likely that he ever will?

Well, when it comes to miracles which appear to upset natural law, we do well to remember first that in every single case they belong to a prescientific age. In such ages they are reported not only by Biblical Jews but by Taoists, Buddhists, Hindus, and Mohammedans. Lao-tse is said to have raised persons from the dead. Gautama is said to have passed through a stone wall, to have walked on the water, and at a word of command to have caused a flood to recede. Mohammed is said to have made the sun stand still. And all this notwithstanding the fact that Lao-tse, Gautama, and Mohammed all personally disclaimed any power or desire to work

miracles. Which brings to light another fact which we do well to remember; namely, that miracles increase in number and wonder with distance from the date when they are alleged to have occurred. In contemporaneous literature, where such exists, no mention is made of miracles; but in documents written a generation or two later than the events recorded, miracles appear with increasing frequency and increasing elaboration.

An interesting example of the way in which miracles become elaborated is furnished by the famous stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi. It appears to be a well-authenticated fact that, as the result of long and intense contemplation of the sufferings of Christ, St. Francis developed on his own body certain marks that bore a curious resemblance to the wounds of Jesus. Instances of this sort, though rare, are not unknown to science; and they furnish a sufficiently astonishing example of the power of mind over matter. But notice now what happens to the stigmata of St. Francis. In a document written the day after he died it is stated that his hands and feet appeared as though they had been pierced with nails. In a document written three years later it is stated that the nails themselves, formed of the saint's own flesh, were revealed to the astonished gaze of his disciples. And in the "*official*" *Life*, written a generation later, it is stated that if you pressed the nails on one side they protruded from the other side as though they were hard all the way through.

We appear to be confronted with these interesting and significant facts: In our modern world, a world trained to think scientifically, law-upsetting miracles no longer occur; and in those pre-historic ages when they are supposed to have occurred, they increase in number and in wonder with distance from the time of their alleged occurrence. Another fact which commands consideration is that every great religious leader of mankind expressly and repeatedly disavowed any power or desire to work miracles. Of those four Gospels which constitute the biography of our Lord, the fourth informs us that Jesus did refer on one occasion to his own wonderful works. It also informs us that what he said about them

was, "The works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do." The wonderful works of Jesus, his astonishing and beneficent cures, were repeatable because they were performed in accordance with law. As for acts not in conformity with law, Jesus not only refused to perform them but deplored and decried the desire to see them performed. Again and again men said to him, "What sign doest thou that we may see and believe thee?" By a sign they meant a miracle comparable to those which their ancestors were said to have witnessed when the sea divided to let them pass and the heavens rained bread for them to eat; and to this demand for miracles Jesus' reply was, "It is an evil and adulterous generation that seeketh after a sign."

Why is it only a faithless generation that wants to see miracles performed? Because the demand for miracles is essentially a demand that divinity shall declare itself, not in the beauty and order of the world, nor in the loving-kindness of human hearts, but in some kind of startling, law-defying stunt. As if a rod turned suddenly into a serpent, or a bush burning and unconsumed, or the sun's shadow moving backward on a dial were a revelation of anything very wonderful or dependable at the heart of the world! As if spiritual values could be attested by physical performances! Men who cannot detect the presence of divinity in the beauty and order of the world and in the glory of a great human soul are so devoid of spiritual insight, so essentially faithless that, as Jesus remarked on one occasion, they would not see and believe any significant truth even though one should rise from the dead.

This demand for miracles is a demand which, if it were granted, would not advance the race a single step in its understanding or achievement of the true glory of life. The ability to walk on water, or to pass through a stone wall — what has that to do with the ability to control one's temper, or to remain sweet under disappointment, or to face life bravely and hopefully, or to be forgiving and kind? As a matter of fact, miracles that are nothing more than startling, law-defying stunts have so little to do with moral character that, among



peoples who believed in them, they were attributed not only to God but to the devil. The demand for miracles is a revelation of intellectual and spiritual immaturity.

Today, to be sure, nobody wants to see a rod turned into a serpent, or to see a bush burn without being consumed, or to see the sun's shadow move backward on a dial. Nobody, so far as I have discovered, is asking Gandhi to establish the truth of his teaching by passing through a stone wall. Miracles of this sort we no longer even desire, much less expect. But many of us would like to believe that, if we do get into trouble of any kind whatsoever, we may ask God to get us out, regardless of the operations of natural law. Suppose that we cannot entertain such a belief: what is left which we may believe to our soul's comfort?

It is a profoundly interesting and significant fact that whenever some belief which human beings have long cherished has been found to be untenable, men's eyes have been opened to the possibility of entertaining some other belief which would give them equal, if not greater, comfort. And that I conceive to be true in the case which we now have under consideration. If we feel called upon to surrender our belief in the possibility of law-defying miracles, what is left which we may believe to our comfort? We may believe that we are living in a law-abiding world; and that, when you stop to think about it, is one of the most comforting beliefs that has ever entered into the mind of man. The savage does live, mentally I mean, in a law-ignoring world; and what wouldn't he give to get out of it? The law-ignoring world is a capricious world. You can never know what to expect; so you live habitually in a state of uncertainty, full of anxious fears and forebodings. A law-ignoring world is, indeed, so undependable a world that it does not furnish any basis for scientific discovery or even for scientific investigation. Until men learned to think in terms of law they were absolutely helpless in the presence of a black death. They died like flies during epidemics which they met, not with sanitation and inoculation but with fervent prayers and incantations. They asked for a miracle and

did not get it. They expected miracles which did not occur because they could not. Not until they stopped praying for a miracle that could not happen and began to work for a miracle that could happen in conformity with law were they able to control epidemics.

It is comforting to believe that you are living in a law-abiding world, that in the beautiful and familiar language of New Testament scripture, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." It is comforting because in such a world you can get greater and far more certain results than you could ever hope to get in a world that was not law-abiding.

For notice also this: a law-abiding world is not necessarily a fixed, finished, unalterable world. It may be a plastic, improvable world; and nothing is more certain than that the world which we actually have is a plastic, improvable world. Today<sup>1</sup> there is famine in China, as there has been many times before this. It is estimated that between twenty and twenty-five millions of Chinese are now, or soon will be, utterly destitute. For four long years, in Northern China, there has been virtually no rainfall. Season has followed season during which the crops have been hardly worth harvesting. The farmers have been compelled to eat their seed grain and today there is left literally nothing to eat. But surely something is being done about the matter? Yes, something is being done. A famine relief commission is endeavoring to provide a bowl of soup each day to several thousand wasted, feverish-eyed men, women, and children. Nor is that all which it is endeavoring to do. It is seeking to remove the cause of those devastating famines with which generation after generation in Northern China has been scourged. It is financing the construction of a canal which will bring under permanent cultivation some four hundred thousand acres of land and thus guarantee food for five millions of people. Today it does not appear to be possible to multiply five loaves and two fishes so as to feed

<sup>1</sup> Oct. 6, 1929.

five thousand people, but it does appear to be possible to dig a canal so as to feed five million people! And if what you are concerned about is that people shall be fed, you can hardly complain because the "miracle" is not possible in a world where the engineering feat is possible.

A law-abiding world is not an unalterable world and, consequently, for a multitude of people a barren, bitter, hopeless world; it is on the contrary, and very decidedly, an improvable world. Today science is seriously proposing to use wind and sunlight as inexhaustible sources of power for mankind.<sup>2</sup> It is proposing to make sugar and starch "as cheap as sawdust" by extracting them from plants which now turn their sugar mostly into cellulose. It is proposing to derive a number of food stuffs from such simple and abundant sources as coal and atmospheric nitrogen. And it is proposing to conquer disease to such an extent that, in the words of J. B. S. Haldane, Professor of biochemistry in Cambridge University, "a generation that has lived together will die together." The lovers of the future may be spared the agony of a premature separation!

In those prescientific eras when miracles were believed to occur, they are reported to have occurred only occasionally. An occasional widow found that her cruse of oil was miraculously kept full. An occasional individual was raised from the dead. But the number of destitute widows was in those days far greater than it now is; and whereas, as recently as four hundred years ago, most people died in infancy, today the average person lives to be forty-five. Believe, if you will, in the historicity of every law-defying miracle ever reported; the fact remains that in our world, where such law-defying miracles no longer occur, vastly more people are being benefited by intelligent regard for law than were ever benefited by an occasional performance of miracles.

Everything that we know about the world we live in encourages the attitude of expectancy. The possibilities of life appear to be boundless; at any rate, he would be a very rash

<sup>2</sup> See *Daedalus, or Science and the Future*, by J. B. S. Haldane.

individual who should undertake to draw a line and say, "Beyond that, life will never be able to go." Professor Haldane does, indeed, suggest that the future development of transport and of communication is limited; but no one need be disturbed by the limit which he sets, namely, the velocity of light. "We are working," he says, "toward a condition where any two persons on earth may be completely present one to another in not more than one twenty-fourth of a second." Pasteur believed that it lies within the power of man to rid himself of all parasitic diseases. Sir Oliver Lodge believes that it lies within the power of the living to communicate with the dead. How dogmatic and unwarranted would be the assertion that neither of these achievements is possible! It is, I should say, beyond the peradventure of a doubt that after Jesus was crucified something happened which convinced his disciples that he was still alive; so that whereas on Good Friday they were full of despair, on Easter Sunday they were full of hope. What was it? In the not distant future we may find out. More light may be thrown upon these reported post-crucifixion appearances of Jesus.

A generation trained to think scientifically is naturally and properly on its guard against the belief that anything ever has happened or will happen, contrary to law. But our generation ought equally to be on its guard against dogmatic assertions as to what can and cannot happen in accordance with law. How unwarranted the assumption that all we now know is all we shall ever know, or that all we can now do is all that we shall ever be able to do! And if it is intellectually illegitimate to fix any bounds for the power of man, what shall be said of any attempt to fix boundaries for the power of God? You may believe with good reason that God never has acted lawlessly and never will. But with what kind of assurance may you say precisely what God can or cannot do in conformity with law?

The attitude of expectancy appears to be justified and there are at least two directions in which we of this generation commonly maintain it. We expect to conquer disease, at least, parasitic disease. And what do we not expect in the way of

scientific invention? We are already preparing our minds for the threatened discovery of television and wondering what, oh what, we shall do when our friends are able not only to hear us but to see us over long distances. Dean Inge has suggested that we may even pick up by means of the radio past events "which may still linger on as waves in the ether or something of that kind"; and this, as he also suggests, is a pleasant prospect for guilty consciences!

There are, however, two other directions in which the attitude of expectancy would seem to be justifiable but in which we do not so commonly maintain it. One is in relation to social improvement. How many of us really believe that it is possible to get rid of poverty or of war? Reference is often made to a power, not ourselves, that is making for righteousness. Is there such a power? We should like to believe that there is; and history, certainly, is not without indications of its presence. *Some* power has been working for the abolition of slavery and the abolition of dueling, for the removal of servitude from the lives of women and the removal of exploitation from the lives of children. *Some* power has been working for the increase of knowledge and the spread of culture and the achievement of gentleness in the human spirit. Why, then, should we hesitate to believe in the possibility of still further improvement in the whole structure of human society? Why should we hesitate to believe that the power which has abolished slavery may abolish poverty, and that the power which has put an end to duels between individuals may some day put an end to duels between nations?

Another direction in which we might be more expectant than we commonly are is in relation to our own personal improvement. Every now and then some one acknowledges that he has a very bad disposition. He surprises us by the announcement that he knows that he has it and then disappoints us with the further announcement that he cannot help it. Or perhaps he will say, "I realize that in some respects I am a coward; but what am I going to do about it?" Or he may say, "I realize that people do not like me, that they

find it difficult to get along with me; but, unfortunately, that is the way I seem to be made." It all sounds honest and frank enough, does it not? But why the note of fatality in it? If a man has discovered that he has a bad disposition, why should he assume that he must continue to have that kind of disposition as long as he lives? Again one feels disposed to ask, "What about that power beyond ourselves that is working for righteousness?" Why should a man not believe that it may work for righteousness in him, converting his bad disposition into a good disposition, so that, instead of being the sort of person whom people do not like, he may one day become the sort of person whom people do like?

A refusal to believe in the possibility of miracles that upset law is, in my judgment, entirely reasonable and right. But what shall be said of a refusal to believe in the possibility of miracles performed in accordance with law? In a world which has actually witnessed such miracles as the conquest of yellow fever and of the air, the development of wireless and of the radio, the abolition of slavery, the enfranchisement of women, and the repeated spectacle of transformed individual lives! How altogether right and proper it would be for a congregation of men and women to rise in their places on a Sunday morning and say: "We believe in miracles. We believe that miracles performed in accordance with law have occurred and will occur. We set absolutely no limit to the power of God except that which is inherent in the nature of life. And so, in faith and in hope, we look for the coming of a day when human society will be vastly better than it now is, and when we ourselves shall be better men and women."



## **UNRIGHTEOUS FORGETFULNESS**



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## UNRIGHTEOUS FORGETFULNESS

*God is not unrighteous to forget.* — Hebrews 6:10.

ONE of the most powerful plays of recent years is St. John Ervine's *John Ferguson*. The story takes place in the cottage of an Irish peasant, on whose farm a ruthless brute of a neighbor is about to foreclose a mortgage. As the curtain rises, the little family is clinging desperately to the hope of a letter from a well-to-do brother in Canada. A comparatively small sum of money, negligible to the sender, will save them from being driven out penniless into the highways; and the old father, too infirm to work, is comforting the despondent group with a verse from the Psalms:

Weeping may endure for a night,  
But joy cometh in the morning.

But that joy does not come. The brother, who is in no dire straits himself, forgets to mail his draft in time to catch the first steamer. As a partial result Hannah, the daughter, meets with a terrible fate at the hands of Witherow, who holds the mortgage; Andrew, the brother, takes vengeance with a shotgun and is led away to pay the death penalty; and what might have been a happy home crashes down into a hideous ruin. As the curtain falls, we see the old father turning again to the Book of books, his head bowed beneath a crushing load of grief as he reads the lament of another heart-broken father: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Now the entire blame for the catastrophe cannot be laid upon the shoulders of the forgetful brother. Analyze the story carefully and it becomes clear that every character in the drama shared in the guilt. But the fact remains that the whole tragedy

was precipitated by his forgetting to mail that letter; for if the draft had arrived in time, there might never have been any tragedy at all.

Now this is not an unusual incident. Life is full of similar tales; and in the light of them, it is hard to understand how so many of us can weep over the results of forgetfulness and yet wink at the cause. Memories are notoriously fallible, even the best of them, and we come into the world variously endowed. Here and there we discover persons who are exceptionally gifted. Roosevelt had an uncanny faculty for remembering names. He could lean over the rail of his private car and call out, "Hello, Bill!" to a cowboy whom he had not seen in years. Others never forget dates and telephone numbers. One man I knew who could open a book, read a page at random, and then repeat that page almost word for word — an amazing feat of memory. Most of us, however, belong in a very different category. We can forget anything any time, anywhere, and keep on forgetting it until the crime is discovered! Even a genius like Sir James Barrie has forgotten when and where he wrote *Peter Pan* — so he told Professor William Lyon Phelps in the summer of 1928 — and the original manuscript has apparently been lost. The plain duty resting upon the consciences of all of us, geniuses and ordinary folk, is to exercise and train our memories, as Alice Freeman Palmer schooled herself to remember the names of hundreds of Wellesley graduates. For what seem to be petty slips may easily, as in the case of John Ferguson, become major offenses. Surely we have no business to possess only a "forget-ory" where a memory can be and ought to be!

With all the special Sundays of the year — Mothers' Day, Children's Day, Forefathers' Day and the rest — there ought to be a Memory Day, some glorious Sunday when we stir up that divine gift and strive to make our records clean in the eyes of God and of our fellow men. There are few of us who have not been shocked at times to discover that we had never returned various borrowed articles — books and umbrellas, for example. Fortunately these were not of great

value. But the owner of the book may have spent an hour hunting for it and then been obliged to squander some perfectly good dollars to buy another copy; while the owner of the umbrella was just as much out of pocket as if we had robbed his bank. How many times have we planned to write a letter to an old friend, or to spend an evening with some lonely invalid, and then forgotten all about it! To us the matter was of no consequence; but to them it meant needless heartache and loneliness, the loss of joy and mental sunshine which might have been theirs for many a day. We read notices of good causes that are languishing for funds, of millions who are suffering from drought and flood and earthquake and the dread aftermath of war. We have not much to give, but we do plan to contribute something. Nevertheless, the busy days go by, the appeals fail to attract our attention, and in the end the workers in the good causes are out of pocket for postage. Meanwhile some one is cold and hungry; faces grow pinched and wan; here and there a life is snuffed out. To our blind and comfortable minds these seem to be insignificant matters, but they are not insignificant to the other fellow! All of them cost, some terribly; and the world is less happy and healthy, less progressive and prosperous — possibly it drifts on toward revolution and bloodshed — not because you and I forged checks and wrecked homes and murdered men, but merely because we were *unrighteous to forget*.

Now let us grant at once that in the case of certain things the power to forget is a great blessing. God pity a world in which minds could never forget! To remember all the petty events of the past week would be a calamity. Why lumber up our minds with the exact time that we put on our shoes, the faces which pass us on the street, the insignificant happenings, to say nothing of the crimes and scandals, which clutter up the pages of the daily paper? All such mental impressions ought to be drowned in a sea of oblivion as soon as possible. I confess that I have forgotten the vast majority of facts which I learned at college — the rules of

Greek syntax, unimportant dates in history, and the formulae dealing with cosecants, cotangents and cosines, for example. And I am glad of it! For my work in life I do not need to remember these. Others do, and they ought to know them. But Greek grammars and histories and even trigonometries are in my library, and I can look up all sorts of facts in time of need. Old folk sentimentalize over the happiness of childhood, and childhood is normally happy. But it has also some experiences which, however petty they seem to grown-ups, are to a child heart-breaking sorrows and terrible tragedies. Gray-beards, fortunately, have forgotten these, just as travelers recount the glories of some trip abroad, with no mention of the heat and the dust, the cinders in their eyes and the sleepless nights, the hotel discomforts and the disagreeable people who at times made them savagely unhappy. For months after one friend came back from the bloody trenches of France, he used to wake in the night shrieking at the frightful visions which tormented him. Gradually he has drawn a veil over those memories. They are not gone; but they have sunk down into the subconscious, where, unless something recalls them, they are to all intents and purposes forgotten. Without this gracious, healing ministry of forgetfulness, life would have been an inferno for him always. In extreme cases, the lack of it would drive thousands to the madhouse and a suicide's grave.

At times, moreover, to forget is not only a divine gift but a bounden duty. What a host of people, young and old, are torturing themselves daily with the memories of old faults and failures—the deeds done which they ought not to have done and the deeds left undone which they ought to have done and all the rest of life's sorry heritage! Now, such matters ought not to be forgotten lightly; but the only use of remembering them is that we may learn how to turn old stumblingblocks into stepping-stones, old sorrows into ministers of future joy. Why lash our minds with whips of scorpions to no purpose? Why slash our hearts with knives, unless we accomplish some good? To remember in order that we

may right a wrong, or correct a habit, or prevent the repetition of a moral catastrophe, is glorious; but to torture ourselves needlessly is simply to play the madman and the fool. A heap of dried thorns ought to be burned up, not sat down upon! Why use memory to turn life's song into a snarl?

Another group are hugging old prejudices and grudges and spites and animosities. They spend hours thinking up caustic remarks which they will use at the right opportunity and planning ugly deeds by which they will "get even" — and that always means a little more than even — some triumphant day. Meanwhile they are about as happy as a company of morose toads imprisoned at the bottom of a dank well, and as pleasant neighbors as a family of disgruntled porcupines; moreover, the quills are of their own growing and are sticking into their own skins, not the other fellow's. As for the wells, the toads were the ones who dug them, and all the dankness and darkness are not rolled upon them from without but breathed forth from within as the exhalation of their own souls. Now once more, wrongs are not to be forgotten lightly; but why recall them simply to make ourselves and the world unhappy? Undo them, if possible; learn every lesson which they can teach; transform the enemy into a friend, so far as in you lies; and then put the wretched memories where they belong — under your feet!

What others of us need to forget is not our sorrows or our spites, but the glories of the past — our noble ancestry, our prosperous yesterdays, our notable achievements. To gloat over a good past may block the path to progress almost as much as to grieve over a bad one. Too many people are trying to live on the reputation of what they did ten years ago rather than on what they are doing today; while others spend so much time in boasting about the nobility of their ancestors that they fail to record lives so noble that any descendant will ever boast about them. "Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before," writes Paul! That is one secret of all happy and successful living. There are a thousand memories — memories of bad

books and disgraceful deeds and all sorts of mental and moral rubbish — which ought to be buried and forgotten. Thank God for that strange power by which certain facts may be held in memory! But thank God also for that other gracious faculty by which at times men and women are enabled to forget!

But some forgetting is not a blessing. It is not a duty. It is not a social peccadillo. It is a major crime. For there are facts and truths which we have no business to forget. For one thing, we have no right to forget who we are. There are certain theories concerning human personality which, to say the least, are not inspiring. One writer recently described the human race as a tiny but boisterous bit of organic scum which, for the time being, coats the surface of one of the lesser planets. Our mechanistic friends view us as a welter of soulless electrons, obeying irresistible laws as helplessly and hopelessly as Kipling's stone, kicked by the hoof of a goat from the cliff to the tarn; while certain psychologists discuss man as a jumble of stimuli-response reactions, possessing no permanent meaning or value. Personally I do not find these theories exhilarating, though I am perfectly willing to believe them and remember them and live by them, if they can be proved to be true. That, however, has still to be done; and, for one, I believe that the Christian interpretation is not only more helpful but more scientific and more rational. But whatever our theories, we ought never to lose sight of certain facts.

Some years ago a student entered one of our eastern universities. His parents were cultivated folk in very humble circumstances. They had sacrificed all luxuries, many comforts and some things which we are inclined to view almost as necessities in order to secure his education, and, as they faced old age, all their hopes and affections centered around their boy. Unfortunately the boy forgot all this. By chance he fell in with a fast set, drank heavily, and at the close of a night's spree was picked up on the city's pavement dead. Now when a friend loses his temper or makes some social or moral blunder, we sometimes say, "He forgot himself." Well, this boy forgot himself! He forgot that he was an heir of the

ages, a being into whom millions of ancestors had poured their sacred heritage. He forgot two people who gave him life, entrusted him with their good name, struggled and sacrificed that he might enter upon a noble career. He forgot the man he might have been, the work he might have done, the home he might have had, the treasure which he might have handed on to posterity. He forgot that he was a citizen of a great nation, whose laws he had broken and whose citizenship he had disgraced. He forgot God, the Infinite Spirit back of suns and moons and stars, who had thought him into being and called him to be a fellow worker in the supreme task of growing a man and of creating a world-wide brotherhood, ruled by beauty and righteousness and truth and love. He had forgotten everything that was worth remembering! He was unrighteous to forget. I wonder whether some fathers and mothers could live the lives they lead; whether thoughtful people could either condone or tolerate the evils of the present age; whether men in office, entrusted with the leadership of great nations, could be guilty of the soiled careers and flagrant scandals which have disgraced history, if they remembered who they were? Years ago when some of us read that charming old story, *The Birds' Christmas Carol*, we smiled at the picture of anxious Mrs. Ruggles, training her flock of nine in proper etiquette for the party, and sending them forth with the stern injunction, "Whatever you do, all of yer, never forgit for one second that yer mother was a McGrill!" We smile still, but in the light of that other story our smile becomes serious. Who are you? Who is your mother? Who is your father? What is your country? Are you really an immortal son of God? Answer these questions! And if you are a son of God, then for God's sake — I say the words thoughtfully and reverently — remember it! Those are some facts which you have no business ever to forget!

Another truth which ought never to be forgotten is that every honest man is in duty bound to earn his right to live. Years ago, while climbing in the Engadine, I came to know one of the most useless, most contemptible specimens of the



human race which it has ever been my misfortune to meet. As a baby he had waked to find himself the scion of a wealthy family and heir to a fortune. His father died early, leaving him to the care of a fond and foolish mother, who caressed him and coddled him and ultimately spoiled him, allowing him to grow up into a selfish human jellyfish, a petty, pampered social parasite. He had never done a stroke of honest work in his life, never meant to, and was proud of it. His sole task, apparently, was to hunt for strange sensations and new thrills. All this was done with childlike simplicity and in ways that for the most part were clean and wholesome. Meanwhile a vast multitude of men, some of them lamentably overburdened and underpaid, were toiling for him — mining his coal, making his shoes, serving his meals, running his steamers and trains. Now that man was not immoral, at least, according to popular standards. He was not a liar, or a drunkard, or a thief. He was simply a wilful, able-bodied, industrial scoundrel — a man who had taken everything from life and given back nothing. He could not be put in jail, though he deserved such a sentence far more than do some young victims of the social order whom I have seen there. Nevertheless, he was flagrantly unrighteous — unrighteous because he forgot that every man to whom the world gives a living owes the world the service of a life.

Nor is he alone in his guilt. There are all too many criminals of the same semirespectable sort today. What do you think of a student who takes four of the most valuable years of his life, partial or complete support from his parents, the labor of scholars and authors and printers and teachers, and the income of endowment funds, to do only slipshod, slovenly work? Is he not robbing the bank of the world and failing to earn his physical and mental board? Among his fellow criminals are incompetent carpenters, and shyster lawyers, and quack doctors, and inefficient instructors and ignorant, bigoted preachers. In one of his keen luminous essays, Dr. Luccock pictures all of these folk and a host of others, many of them quite unconscious of their guilt, as travelers who attempt to

avoid paying their passage. Some, he tells us, are trying to ride on life's train by presenting passes inherited from their ancestors; some hope to cheat the conductor by buying half-fare tickets; while others are hiding in freight cars, or clinging to the bumpers, like so many industrial and spiritual tramps. And yet every morning God greets all such folk with the silent but stern demand, "Fares, please!" It is a miracle of his mercy that some of us are not flung bodily off the train!

Another group who are unrighteous to forget are those who live callously indifferent to their social responsibilities. They are well fed, well dressed and housed, industrious and thoroughly respectable people. Their only crime is that they have forgotten the awful conditions under which thousands of their fellows are living — thousands, furthermore, who are not social criminals, bearing their just punishment, but merely the innocent unfortunates who have suffered "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," victims of an imperfect industrial order as well as of human brutality and greed. Some years ago a skilled investigator estimated that in New York's tenements there were some 270,000 dark rooms which never see the sun; and that in certain sections, from twelve to twenty per cent of the children were undernourished, one person in fourteen was evicted because he could not pay the rent, and one in twelve was buried in the potter's field. These figures sound incredible; they would be bad enough if they were cut in two. Another report issued by the Industrial Relations Commission stated that thirty-nine per cent of the mothers in industry were forced to work, and that up to the outbreak of the Great War two thirds of the women in factories were receiving eight dollars a week or less, and one half of them six dollars a week or less. Wage-earners, moreover, were losing more than one fifth of their time in unemployment, while here in prosperous America, before this era of industrial depression, ten million people were living in poverty in normal times. All of this has nothing to do with the chain gangs in Africa, or the child widows in India, or the millions — not only in China

but in Europe — who lie down hungry every night. For these facts none of us are directly responsible. Often there is very little that we can do. But have we any right to forget these conditions? Are we not in duty bound to be intelligent and sympathetic and, so far as in us lies, helpful? Too many of us look out upon the tragedies of life with all the comfortable detachment and lack of responsibility with which we view the mock tragedies of the movies. In the words of Philip Guedalla, we are like spectators "watching an earthquake from a seat in a cabaret." Some day that earthquake may swallow the cabaret and the spectators in it! Why not take time now to remember these facts and to do something about them? Not one human being in a million wills these tragedies. He simply forgets them. Thank God there is One who is not *unrighteous to forget!*

Some of us, however, who have sinned in none of these ways, are nevertheless guilty. We have not been deliberately immoral. We are not loafers or parasites, and we have shared our good fortune with sad and overburdened lives. Our crime is that of having forgotten our dreams and ideals. For we have had hours, every one of us, when we have been brought face to face with our best possible selves — the characters we might win, the work we might do, the homes we might have, the happy trail of gracious service which we might leave during our little journey in the world. And then we have gone forth from those hours and been unrighteous to forget. Our crime, as one has phrased it, is that we are living bungalow lives on skyscraper foundations. We shall never build the glorious palaces which God dreamed for our souls. Marguerite Wilkin-son has painted a poignant picture of this fate in her poem "Guilty."

I never cut my neighbor's throat;  
My neighbor's gold I never stole;  
I never spoiled his house and land;  
*But God have mercy on my soul!*

For I am haunted night and day  
By all the deeds I have not done;  
O unattempted loveliness!  
O costly valor never won!

And it might have been won, if we had not been unrighteous to forget our visions of ourselves, our work, our homes — yes, our visions of God!

“Visions of God!” you say. “We have never had any visions of God! No supernatural visitations, no moments of spiritual ecstasy when we have been caught up into the seventh heaven, no voices out of the sky have ever come to us!” No, neither have they come to me. And yet we have had visions of God and heard his voice, every one of us. The experiences were all simple and natural. It may have been the thrill of a great hour when we opened up our hearts and discussed our life-plans with a friend by the fireside; or when a glowing message leaped from the pages of a noble book, entralling our minds and molding our wills. It may have been a day when from the summit of some snow-capped crag we watched the sunlight pour in a luminous flood over Alpine valleys, or a night when we saw the moon rise over “the billowing vast of the unplumbed sea.” Or it may have been those other moments — moments when we faced the miracle and the mystery of life, as we bent over a cradle and pondered on the unsolved problem of life’s beginning, or stood by the bedside of a friend, as he drifted out of our lives into the unknown. Somehow at such times we became conscious of a great invisible Companion. In whatever language we moderns may choose to describe that sense of friendship and kinship with the infinite, is there any better symbol for it than the beloved old word — God? In such hours it was impossible not to believe that this marvelous universe possessed value and purpose and meaning. A Power which had brought life and will and intelligence and love into being might be infinitely more than these, but could it be less? No; life meant much, and meant intensely! We

hungered for truth and beauty and goodness, and we hated falsehood and ugliness and vice. We felt as if we were surrounded by a host of the good and the great — what the old creedmakers called “the communion of saints” — comrades of the way, seen and unseen, with whom we were journeying. In that companionship we rose to the full height of our manhood and womanhood. Our heads were in the sunlight, the spiritual atmosphere was fragrant, our minds were thinking the thoughts of the Infinite Spirit after him, and our hearts were living temples of that mysterious Presence which we call holy, not only because it is hallowed but because it makes us whole.

What were those hours? Were they simply chemical phenomena in a moving biological laboratory, physical accidents in a welter of electrons, a meaningless muddle of stimuli-response reactions in a universe which was nothing more than a ruthless machine, a brainless IT? Or did God really speak to us? And if he did, what have we done with his message? Have we remembered it until we transformed it into a glorious reality, or have we been unrighteous to forget? How many men and women have heard these voices, and then, after plodding through lives sometimes drab failures and sometimes equally drab successes, have found themselves looking back over the years with the thoughts and emotions of Sinclair Lewis’ famous character, George F. Babbitt! “It was coming to him,” writes the author, “that perhaps all life as he knew it and vigorously practiced it was futile; — that he hadn’t much pleasure out of making money; that it was of doubtful value to rear children merely that they might rear children who would rear children. What was it all about? What did he want?” Well, Babbitt wanted life — and he did not get it! And all the time the Great Teacher of Nazareth was saying to him, “I am come that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.” Babbitt wanted happiness — and he did not win it! And all the time that same Great Teacher was saying to him, “These things have I spoken unto you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be filled

full." And Babbitt wanted peace, life's abiding satisfactions — and he did not find them! And all the time the Great Teacher was saying to him: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Life, joy, peace — all were waiting for Babbitt! And they are waiting for you and for me, if we are not unrighteous to forget!

One of the great problems in any life is what to remember and what to forget. Well, whatever his young friend Timothy forgot, there was one supreme fact, one glorious vision, which Paul longed to imprint indelibly upon his mind and heart. "Remember Jesus Christ!" he wrote. Remember Jesus Christ! I wonder what changes would take place on the campuses of our schools and colleges, if every student would take five minutes a day to remember that heroic figure! Surely some words that sting would never be spoken, some deeds that stain would never be done! What would happen in the industrial world, in the social order, in racial and international relationships, if men and women would dare every morning to look into the face of the Carpenter Prophet, and then, with his spirit in their minds and hearts, go forth to accomplish the day's work? Some of us have seen Jesus and forgotten him; some have never seen him simply because we have never tried. All of us can see him — all of us ought to! Remember Christ Jesus! And then "be ye imitators of God," your Father, who is never "unrighteous to forget"!



## **MAKING PEOPLE CARE**



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## MAKING PEOPLE CARE

"I came to save." What do those words of Jesus mean to a generation seeking freedom? Some of you doubtless feel that this is a subject for a Bowery mission, because it is easy for us respectable people to think that we can be good if we really want to be.

But that is just the question I have in mind, to start with. Several years ago a group of students were discussing the value of an unselfish life, and afterwards one of them came to me with this query: "I agree that the unselfish life is the best thing, but how do you make yourself care for it?" The arguments had all been accepted, but here was something which arguments did not touch. This person had knowledge of the right kind of life, but mere knowing did not make him care. He had will power, but making a careless life care was something which will power alone could not accomplish. This has always been the central problem of everybody's life. There is the wide-open world of art and music and knowledge—how do you make people care for it? There is the life of honor and integrity and service; how do you make people care for it? From the mission in the slums all the way up to the respectable levels of your intellegentsia, it is ever the same old problem: After you know what is best, how do you make yourself care for it?

Dean Sperry of Harvard, in a recently published address, makes it plain that here is the central trouble in this undisciplined age of ours. When you do not care very much for anything, you do not care very much what you do. If you do not care enough about football, you will not bother about training. If you do not care for your work, then you will dodge the drudgery. The loose and unrestrained living, so prevalent today, is running its course because so many people

have failed to find an interest for which they deeply care. "We are a distracted generation," he says, "and our native capacity for noble cares is dissipated by many confusing claims." Yes, here always is the main issue: after you know what is best, how do you make yourself care? There is a curious helplessness at that point from which we constantly need to be rescued. It is this that lies back of the language of salvation.

We must admit right off that the church language about salvation is leaving more and more people cold. In one of our big cities I noticed the other day a crowd gathered around a little company from the Salvation Army. The speaker was a woman of real dignity and power and she was saying with unquestioned sincerity: "I am saved; I have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. I was a sinner, but Christ died for me and took away my sins, and I am saved. And he died for you, my brothers; believe on him and you will be saved from your sins." I could imagine how some down-and-outer there, helpless in his gutter life, might give himself up to that appeal in a desperate reach for anything that could save him from what he was; but the crowd of respectable people simply looked on with reverence and respect. That language left them cold. Your generation is mostly in that crowd.

More and more people, I say, feel remote from this traditional phraseology. It centered around the problem of getting a new start when you were in the grip of the consequences of a past life. That is a real problem. If there were no way to stop or change or escape from the working out of our past actions, what a hell this world would be! Just how Christ helped in this matter, men have not been able to agree. It has been put in various ways: We violated God's law and he could not forgive us until some satisfaction had been given him, his honor upheld, or the debt paid, or due punishment taken by some one; so out of his love for us God sent his only begotten Son, who died for our sins and thus became a sacrifice or propitiation, or paid the debt, or took the punishment and upheld the honor of God. Thus all who believed on him and

trusted him might be saved. Some of that language came out of the Jewish sacrificial system; some of it came later out of feudal ideas and monarchical ideas about propitiating the favor of an outraged king or feudal lord. How many there are today who do not feel at home in these ideas! But we wonder how much of this church language, compiled from different ages of thought, Jesus himself would recognize. He went, you remember, to the house of a stingy little tax-gatherer, who had been grafting profits from the poor; and when he left that house he said salvation had come there. That stingy man had been made to care so much about being square and generous that he offered half of his goods to the poor and promised to restore fourfold anything he had wrongfully taken. Making him care like that was the way out from the consequences of his past. When he cared that way he could have used his selfish past as an argument to persuade other grafters to quit their miserable business. When he cared like that he was the sort of man God could use to undo some of the consequences. When he cared like that the old evil in him seemed to be swallowed up and overcome and used to a good end. And even though some things could not be undone, when he cared like that he was in a mood where his irrecoverable past could act like a great urge to make the most of life that was left. Caring like that is God's way of taking care of a past. And it has always been the one hope of the world. Evidently the language may change, but the bottom fact remains the same — that old problem of making careless people care.

Quite apart from conventional language, then, let us see how we can be saved from the "don't-care attitude" and made to care. If God has an arrangement for meeting this situation, we should be able to find it in ordinary, everyday life.

Our first experience of God's arrangement is in the tendency of a careless life to disintegrate. Down in a deep wood where I played as a boy there was a huge basswood tree, two feet in diameter. It had withstood the storms of a half century and more, and it looked like an unconquerable monarch of the forest. But one quiet day in summer, a gentle breeze

toppled it over with a tremendous crash. When we examined it we found that the whole interior of that tree had disintegrated into sawdust, by the action of little insects which had been eating away unseen. So it is with a man who doesn't care enough about integrity. He may get by with a little dishonesty and then with a little more, but inevitably his force of character will disintegrate. So a man who does not care may get by with self-indulgence for some time, but in the long run his health or his influence or both will gradually disintegrate. A man who cares only for himself may make a show of life, but inevitably the connections that bind him to other people disintegrate. Selfishness breaks up the very relations that widen and enlarge a man's life. A man who does not care for some high and dominating purpose may put up a good front, but after a while the unity of his life begins to break up and his interests become divided.

We are each of us a bundle of instinctive energies. These are the raw material for character. Unless they are brought under the domination of some larger purpose, they contend among themselves for supremacy and our inner life becomes a battlefield. If repressed, this battle breaks out in strange perversions of behavior, character disintegrates, and personality goes to pieces. Nobody can change this arrangement whereby life disintegrates when we do not care for something greater than ourselves. This is God's plan for making carelessness show itself up and check itself. There is no way to dodge the working out of this law of life. God has given us a nature that was meant to care greatly for interests beyond itself. If we fail to care, then this God-given nature gets out of hand, and disintegration sets in. Thus God uses our very self-interest to bring us to our senses. This is not at all like dealing with a touchy monarch whose honor is offended by our disobedience, whose wrath demands some arbitrary punishment and whose forgiveness must be made possible by some courtroom transaction.

But all this does little more than make us cautious. The next experience of God's arrangement for making us care lies

in the discovery that life is not a solitaire game but teamplay. What you do matters to other people who play the game of life with you. If you row your own boat on the lake it does not matter much to anybody else what you do. You can pull hard or you can loaf along, for you take all the consequences. But in an eight-oared shell it is different. There you have to pull your weight in the boat or the other men have to pull you. If you weaken, it means a harder job for those who get that boat across the line. And life is not like a lake where everybody is paddling his own canoe. God did not arrange it that way. He linked us together so that we could take the consequences of one another's living. That is the way to accomplish most for all, and it is the best way to get under the skin of a shirker. When we suffer for what we do it makes us cautious. When others share the burden of our failure, it reveals our yellow streak and rouses our sense of honor. Think what a factor this has been, all your life, in saving you from the "don't-care attitude." Watch some man who has made a fool of himself and got his life into some disgraceful mess. Have you never seen one in this situation fairly squirm in agony, not for himself, but at the thought of his family, who have to be told and who have to suffer for his mistakes? That certainty that some one else will share the consequences of what we do is what keeps most of us as decent as we are.

So in the larger affairs of the world. We are being aroused from the don't-care attitude in industrial life by the people who have suffered from our heartless commercialism. God is not making hosts of people suffer in order to make you and me wish to be better, but when they suffer at our hands their suffering is not being wasted. It may be unjust, and the spirit of revolt against it is of the very essence of God's spirit; but this very injustice becomes effective in changing the conscience of mankind. The victims of child labor, miners and millhands battling for justice, the unemployed — these have been taking the consequences of a selfish society; and through them, we are being made to think and care for a fairer world for all. In the last war, millions of men and women took the fearful

consequences of an attempt to run the world as though every nation were here to look out for itself. Through them we have been made to care for some better way to live together.

By some vast plan of God, moving on in spite of us, our interdependence is growing year by year. This inevitable necessity of taking the consequences of each other's living is driving us to acknowledge that life on this planet is not a solitaire game but teamplay. Each of us is not paddling his own canoe. We are all in the same boat. Something about this situation makes us more than cautious. It gets down to our sense of shame, rouses our sense of honor. Here is an influence growing more potent today to lift the morality of the world up from selfish respectability to good sportsmanship in teamplay.

On top of this comes another experience of God's arrangement for making us care. It is our contact with people who do not spare themselves. A friend recently told me of the heroic act of a common workingman. He was working at a windlass, pulling up a large bucket of rock from a deep hole where two other men were digging. Just as the load reached the top, something happened to the control of the machine and the windlass reversed, dropping the bucket at a furious rate toward the heads of the men below. The man knew there was no room for his fellows to get out of the way. He realized they were caught like rats in a trap. There was not a second to lose, and like a flash he thrust his own arm into the cog wheels clear to his shoulder — and stopped the bucket. Why do you care for a spirit like that? It makes you care, that is all. There is no explanation. He may have been a rough and uncouth man. Your maiden aunt might not have liked to hear him swear and see him chew tobacco. Polite society would not have let him in at the front door in his crude clothes. But there was something about him that was more important than respectability. There was an unsparing spirit that puts all selfishness to shame and makes one wish he could play the man like that when some one really needed him.

Commander Byrd tells us in his last book that he was made

to care for his life of adventure by contact with the unsparing spirit of one of the first polar explorers. Byrd met there a power that made him care for the quest of truth — cost what it would. In Boston there is a young dentist, well at the top of his profession, able to command high prices from the wealthiest clients; and now his chief concern is to find a way to bring the benefits of his profession to the great middle class of people, who are not supposed to go to public clinics for the poor and who cannot afford the standard prices of dentistry. It is not a dramatic case, but that sort of unsparing concern in all sorts of lives is behind the growing compassion for humanity which Elihu Root says is the outstanding fact of the last fifty years of history. People like that dentist have embodied a spirit that makes careless people care.

You and I live in a great stream of lives who have embodied this spirit which, directly or indirectly, they caught from a Man who lived in Galilee nineteen hundred years ago. Unlike any other man on earth he incarnated this unsparing spirit of love. Out from that perfect life has flowed a power to make men care that has permeated to every corner of the world. Apart from all theories about the divinity of Christ, his life with its increasing influence is the great miracle of human history. He is so involved in all the life that has influenced us that we can still say, with the people of his day, He died for us. Through him and all who have been affected by him we are reached, as nowhere else, by the power from God that makes us care. Maude Royden of England has said that she bases her religion on the belief that the Holy Spirit of God is that spirit in us and in others that makes us care for truth and desire beauty and love people. We never can explain why we thus care — we are constrained. Just where we are helpless to make ourselves care, there comes from within and through other people this power from God to make us care, we know not how.

But we never see what Christ and his cross really mean until we take upon ourselves some of this business of making people care. That is where all progress is hung up — just



where it is hard to make people care. Start to live ahead of the crowd anywhere and promote a good cause, and you see that everything turns on this issue of making people care. You begin to feel the burden of their indifference. Their obstinacy and opposition weigh upon you. If you try to be a pioneer in any calling, you have to take upon yourself the shame of those people who disgrace your profession and give it an evil name. But this is the only way the world can be made better. Some one must pull on the oars, no matter who is loafing. In the past some one has pulled the boat up to the point where we have come aboard, and now our turn has come. Edna Ferber, in her novel *Cimmaron*, makes one of her characters say that some people make the world, and the rest just come along to live in it. Evidently the creative power of God that moves the world along is most aggressive through those unsparing spirits who have pulled at the oars and suffered for the selfishness of others who just sit in the boat and ride. Theirs may be a hard place to fill; but any one in their position can know that through the very unfairness of their suffering works the power of God to make people care in the end. That power is the one sovereign, tireless, undefeatable power in the universe. The cross of Christ gave this courageous faith to the world. In that life crucified we learned where to unite with the wisdom of God and the power of God, whereby, in the long run, men are made to care for something greater than themselves.

“ Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne, —  
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.”

Some people make the world; the rest just come along to live in it.

## WHO'S WHO

**CLARENCE AUGUSTUS BARBOUR.** President of Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. Popular speaker at universities, colleges and boys' preparatory schools. Former President and Trustee of Rochester Theological Seminary; President of the Northern Baptist Convention.

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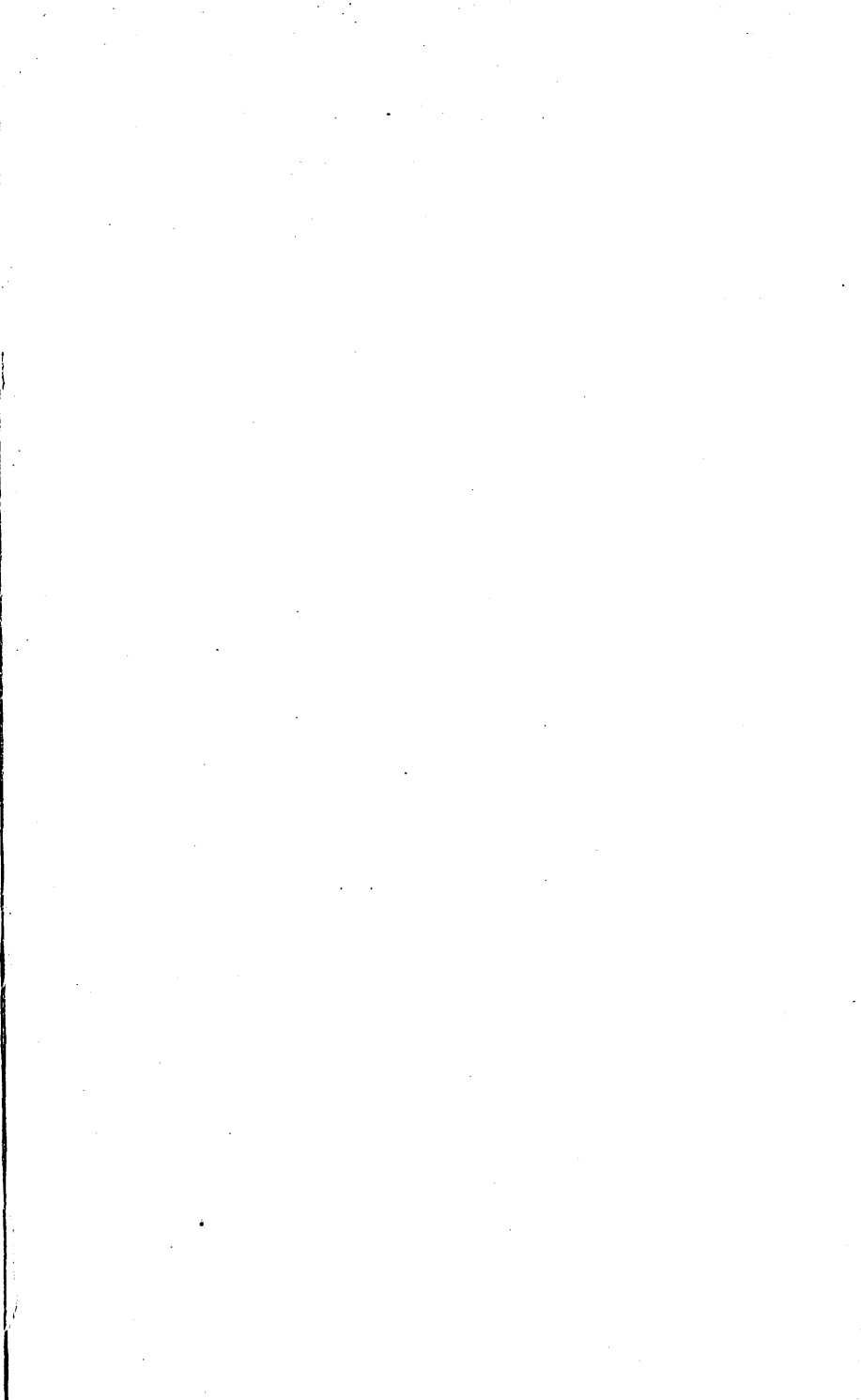
**RUSSELL HENRY STAFFORD.** Successor of the late Dr. George A. Gordon as minister of the Old South Church in Boston. A trustee of Drury, Anatolia and Piedmont Colleges and of the Emerson College of Oratory. Also the author of several books.

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